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A MOTOR CAR DIVORCE



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ROME

" '*In the Piazza di Spagna,—the lure of the strangers*' "

A Motor Car Divorce

By

Louise Closser Hale

With Drawings
By Walter Hale



New York
Dodd, Mead & Company
1906

[illegible]

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Published, February, 1906



To
My Mother

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Chapter I

JOHN and I are going to get a divorce and an automobile! Perhaps I should say an automobile and then a divorce, for the auto is to come first, but, on the other hand, we would not get the machine did we not intend to get a divorce too, and, yet, we would not be able to get the divorce without the machine. Naturally, I am a little excited over these purchases, never having had an auto before—nor a divorce either, for that matter, but I wish to make myself quite clear, that injustice may not be done me by those who have little understanding of the new thought, ditto woman. I would not have mother know it for the world, but, primarily, she is the cause for my leaving John, nor would I dare let her know that I am leaving him. She wouldn't allow it for a moment, and would say terrible old-fashioned things about not knowing on which side my bread is buttered. Moreover, one would think John her son by the way she raves over him, and I only an in-law person. I suppose she feels obliged to stand by her choice. Well, perhaps John was some my choice too, but it was she who sent me off on the visit to Aunt Jane's, "that I might appreciate a good home when I got back" (though, of course, I never told Aunt Jane that), and it was she who allowed me to stay on after

having heard of my meeting John Ward, and of his making such outrageous love to me when I was only seventeen and ought to have been playing with dolls; and while I wouldn't want to say it to her face, I'm quite sure if Aunt Jane hadn't been so set against the marriage she would not have encouraged it at all. The very day Aunt Jane wrote home that John was much too nice to anchor himself to a flyaway like me, mother sent the family wedding veil out to be mended; and so here I am married for ten years, and not a line in my face. It seems only fair that she should pay the expenses of the divorce, really it does, especially since the grounds are going to be so costly.

That sounds like a real estate deal, but it is something much better, it's Italy and France in an automobile (I *must* learn to say motor car, it's so simple and so English), and, of course, it's not the mere clay of these countries that is to be the means of our separation, though that might be called the background, if I wasn't very serious over this. The real ground for divorce is to be incompatibility of temper, and even with such a good reason I believe I'll have to live in New Jersey for a long while, though John has promised to make me comfortable in our Morristown place—which is very kind of him.

I am generous and broad and perfectly good friends with John. Indeed, my present attitude is the result of my broadening view of life. There is something

very fine in going about knowing that your mind is getting larger every minute, while your figure remains exactly the same. It makes one kind and compassionate to fat women who, strangely enough, move in small circles and have no breadth of view whatever.

Contact with all kinds of people has helped to give me this wide vision. I don't mean that I will ever know any of the wrong kind, but going up and down in elevators with them, or sitting near them in a restaurant, or having them in the next apartment to you even (until you can get hold of the agent), all tends to make you tolerant and gentle with those more unfortunate than yourself. Religion, too, has helped me. It was I who headed a movement in our Minerva Club to supply all the Raines Law hotels with Bibles, and I, at my own expense, stocked one dreadful place three times, since the guests were continually stealing them. (I never spoke of this before. John laughed at me so insultingly when I told him of my little effort that I thought it best in the future not to let the right hand know what the left hand doeth.) But the Minerva Club has done more to widen my horizon than any other medium in my life, and it is the club that I will have to thank for the freedom which will soon be mine—if John will just behave himself and help me.

We discuss all sorts of subjects at our club. I shan't bother about remembering any of them now, except the theory which George Meredith advanced

this year and which caused so much talk in the papers —that suggested clause in a marriage contract, I mean, which permits a man and woman to separate at the end of ten years if they find themselves incompatible. That thought took hold of me from the first, and so it did with several members who have been married just ten years, too. We would talk about it for hours, but always as we were about to arrive at some conclusion, one of the women would look at her watch, shriek out that she was expecting her husband home early and bound away. One by one they did this until I was the only one left who dared go home as late as I pleased. It made me despise them horribly, and at last, over some "fruit" punch, which one of the husbands had sent in to us from his club near by, I told the whole meeting what I thought of women made of words, not actions, and how we, who were among the pioneers in liberty of thought, should be pioneers in liberty of movement, and I, for one, was ready to demonstrate my belief. It created great excitement, there were cries of "Hear! Hear!" and murmurs of "Isn't she splendid?" and "Fine mentality!" and just as I felt I was reaching the zenith of my ambition and perhaps would be elected president next year, a mean woman in the back seat called out coolly, "Well, why don't you demonstrate?" There were some snickers from various members who had felt my attack, and all in a flash I answered back: "I am about to demonstrate, my friends. My ten years of slavery will soon be at an end." After

that I quietly left the platform, amid the hurrahs of my supporters—and hurried home to dinner.

It must have been a very good dinner, for John was in excellent humour, but my head whirled so I didn't know what I was eating, and I wondered how John could call me "Little Peggy," and lean over and cut up my *filet* in that silly way he has, when he saw such grave determination in my eyes. I tried several times to tell him of my decision, but I could get no farther than the name of the club, when he would go off into explosions of laughter. However, I waited for him to come home from his rubber at whist that evening (I received him in a dressing gown, with my hair all over my shoulders, so as to let him know what he was losing) and I managed to give him some idea of the events of the day. I must say that he took it very well, though I found myself dreadfully frightened. Once or twice I thought he was smiling; his hand half shaded his face from the firelight and I couldn't see very well, but I believe now it was a quiver of pain, and it made me sad that I must hurt so good a man, yes, and attractive, though thirty-eight, and slightly grey on the temples. When I had finished my plea, or, rather, my demand for a release from him, he had pulled himself together and was in fine form.

"See here, little girl," he said, "you have talked a lot about this ten-year contract. I have had it all winter, often at breakfast, over the eggs, sometimes as late as the cheese at dinner, frequently a curtain

lecture while I finished my cigar. I got my measure of fun out of it, and no doubt you have, but there's little fun in dragging our domestic affairs onto the dinky platform of a woman's club. Now you've declared yourself to this party of nutty hens and you've got to live up to it——"

"Got to," I cried out, getting over on his knee as quickly as possible, as I always do when I want to make my point, "got to—why I pine for it. I must have more life, more freedom, I want to think for myself——"

"Here's your chance," he interrupted rudely, sitting me down quite hard, "do some thinking right now—what's the cause for this divorce?"

"Incompatibility of temper," I answered, ready for him.

"Where are your witnesses?" he flung back.

"The servants," I snapped.

John roared. "Have I ever struck you? Have we ever quarrelled? Have I ever used cruel and abusive language?"

"Not yet," I admitted, a little flustered, and then, struck by a happy thought, "however, it takes two to make a quarrel, John, and I expect you to help me out in this—as—as a gentleman should."

At this he went off into another convulsion of mirth, but afterwards sobered up a bit, and holding me very straight, with his hands on my shoulders, he shook his head gravely at me. "No, Peggy," he said, "we'll not smutty up our nice little home, full

of its happy memories, for the sake of servants' evidence, nor will I send you to Dakota on a ninety-day rest cure, but if you'll leave it to me, I'll think of a way, some way, my dear."

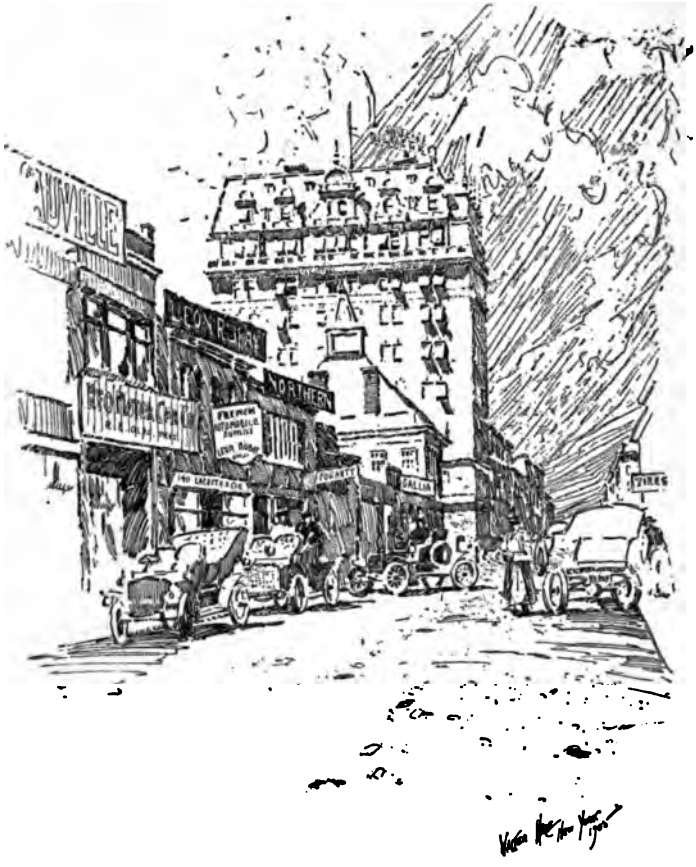
"Very well, John," I answered, mollified. "You think of a way, and I'll get the divorce. That's a fair divide."

The very next day John found a way (that's a rhyme, but I won't change it, for luck). He said it came to him like an inspiration when he passed an automo—I mean a motor-car agency. I looked very hard at John when he told me this, for he has been at me to let him buy a motor for a long time, but I contained myself, and when he had entirely unfolded his plan, I was forced to admit it was very good, even though he gained his point about buying a car. Once I had told him that he would have to choose between a motor car and me, and I hated to weakly capitulate, but now, as he himself was unkind enough to suggest, I need have no feeling about going back on my word, as I would be leaving only a few weeks after the arrival of the abhorred purchase, and in the meantime it was serving its original purpose as a means of separating us.

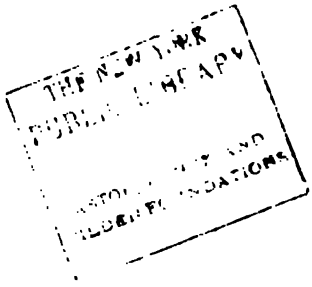
His idea is to buy a good American machine—John is American to the backbone—take it to Naples with us, and drive it through Italy and France clear up to Cherbourg, or some such port on our return trip home. I am to accompany him and keep a diary, in which I am to register our daily bickerings,

and when the time comes bring it into court as evidence against him—which he will not deny. We went into the subject very thoroughly, and I told John I would not be "made a monkey of," to borrow one of his phrases, and go over there only to have him angelic to me during the entire trip. But he said he would not beat his wife even before a Frenchman, though I could put into my diary what I wished. It was quite bad enough, he said, to admit striking a woman, to say nothing of doing so. John is the only man I ever knew who preferred the name to the game.

The only other serious hitch to the arrangement is a possibility of a judge throwing out any evidence on ill temper for the reason that automobiling brings out a disposition peculiarly its own, and one not calculated to interfere with domestic happiness as soon as the couple get out of the car. This occurred to me after running out to Greenwich with the Haverlys yesterday. He drove, and Mrs. Haverly sat with him and insisted upon leaning over to work the tooter whenever they passed a house, no matter how clear the road was. She said it was a nice car and she wanted people to see them. Her husband was wild; he said it was a "cheap skate" thing to do and called her the most shocking names under his breath, though not entirely under—by straining my ears I heard most all of them, and gathered several expressions that will read well out of my diary. It was not for selfish reasons that I listened, however. I did it out



NEW YORK
"'The street of the Agencies'"


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of kindness to Mrs. Haverly, who might want evidence herself some day, though one would never believe it possible, to hear their billing and cooing as soon as they get out of the auto. It made me very uncomfortable, and if we strike a judge who has a wife and a car both, our divorce won't have a leg to stand on.

I spoke of this to John and suggested that he think of something else, but he became quite peevish about it, said it was the surest way he knew and the quickest, and he hoped I wouldn't disappoint him. I don't know what he meant by disappoint. If I thought he was taking advantage of this divorce to get a car I should abandon the whole project, and, on the other hand, if he was really as eager to free me as would appear in this statement, I should return to my old narrow sphere as a punishment to him. I kept my temper and replied that if he continued in that tone he could probably gain his happy release without going farther than Jersey City. That alarmed him and he promised not to get mad again until we reached Italy. He said it was the romance of the thing that appealed to him. We had knocked about Italy so often without any definite point in view that this trip, with such an unusual incentive, ought to be full of novel enjoyment. I looked at his face in the mirror quickly—I sometimes catch him that way—but it seemed quite unsmiling, so I reminded him gently that the ultimate design was not a cause for flippant rejoicing, but, rather, a fuller contentment

caused by the broadening of our diverging ways. At this he kissed me, and while I remonstrated did it again, and said he would continue to do so until the decree was in my hands.

So I let him.

Chapter II

JOHN is going to pay me handsome alimony. I never suggested this to him in any way; he thrust the offer upon me after I had begun practising on a typewriter through the evenings—my means of support when I am free. He says I make prettier music at the piano, and he knows I should spell *don't* d-o-n-'5 if I worked the machine a hundred years. So another channel towards self-improvement is closed to me, for long ago he insisted upon my resigning from the Minerva Club. He says he will not have our method of divorce discussed and probably patterned after by all the enlightened females in New York; that he is going to get a patent on it himself later on. All of which is a painful reflection on my ability to keep from gossiping; but just to show him that I am above such a vulgar desire, I have yielded to his entreaties, although it is hard to meet those women on the street, listen to their congratulations on our "amicable adjustment" and not tell them how widely the abyss is yawning.

My days are well engaged, however, going over the law books in calfskin bindings which old Mr. Ward left us, and finding the States where there isn't much confusing cross-examination. I also spend many hours learning the etiquette of the court-room, and just when to sit down and stand up. By read-

ing in the papers, I picked out the names of several divorce lawyers, and was going in to see one of them yesterday, when whom should I meet but John near the door of the building. I stated my errand quite boldly, and John laughed and said that man was going to be his lawyer and we couldn't have the same one, and not to bother about an attorney, anyway, until we got home—that he needed the retaining fee to buy some extra tires. So we had an ice cream soda instead. It is very nice to be friends with John through all these trying days, and I am going to make an effort to keep up a semblance of affection. Think if I had to go about with him for months and be really at daggers drawn—especially when in a strange country and with no one but a husband to talk to.

He has grown perfectly fascinated with the idea. Not so much with the divorce, I am glad to say, but with "The Means," as he calls the motor car. We haven't decided upon one yet, and it is that which takes all of his time. He says choosing the proper machine is a very serious matter, there are so many things to be considered when one contemplates going over the Apennines twice. To the casual observer, I should say it was a delightful business—this choosing. It seems to consist almost entirely in riding around in different coloured motor cars with very polite chauffeurs, who are called demonstrators when they belong to the agencies. In all parts of the town, wherever I may happen to be, I look up and

see John, with a borrowed cap on, sitting alongside of a gentleman in leggings, and a smile on his face of entire proprietorship. One would think he was going to hand the money right over as soon as the car stopped long enough for him to make the change. I never believed John capable of such duplicity. And some days when I run across him during the morning in a red car, in the afternoon dashing around all grey with white trimmings, and at the dinner hour being driven home in cerulean blue, some days I think of the sewing machines I used to have up "on trial" every spring while I made my shirt-waists, and of how John scolded me for being so dishonest, and I feel quite triumphant in the realisation that mechanical tactics, masculine or feminine, follow along the same lines. But John really does intend to buy one.

Now and then I go with him to see the machines and try them. They are all off by themselves, just like the animals at the circus, in "The Street of the Agencies," as I call it, and one has to look sharp to keep from being run over by the very machine one contemplated buying. All the agents are not only very nice to the multitude who come to look, perhaps to purchase, but are most civil to one another, even when a gentleman who has been taking his friends out for six weeks on trial trips in a lavender car goes off with a yellow one not ten feet from lavender's nose. I thought of what would have happened in mediæval days with all those big machines flying up

and down the street in mad rivalry, of the tiltings and joustings going on between the cars while the buyer waited on the pavement to take the one that held together, and of the dreadful vengeance of strewn, broken glass that lavender would have had for yellow had a gentleman of that day chosen the latter after raising lavender's hopes. I told all this to a black and white agent (the colour of his car, not the agent, nor yet that Scotch whiskey), and he said that his machine would smash all the rest of 'em, so none of 'em dared try. Which seemed very clever until I confided my phantasy to the other agents, and they all echoed him.

I deduced from this incident that there was no use in buying a machine because a kind agent said it was the only thing for us, and I whispered my discovery to John, who squeezed my hand and said that it had occurred to him also; and when I thought that there must be some one car *absolutely* best for us, then looked at the honest faces of the agents, each truly believing his own the most suitable, I realised what a blow it would be when they discovered their unfitness. Nor can one judge of the individual excellence of an auto while spinning around the park with the demonstrators. They all go absolutely alike, no matter what the colour: no bumping over cobbles, or leaping like goats from stone to stone, or running into peaceful people sitting on benches.

"The beauty of this machine is there is no back kick," says the demonstrator of pale pink, which

seems a very good thing, so when we are out in pale blue we say that "*We* have found that the beauty of pale pink is there is no back kick," and behold! it is immediately proven that there is no back kick to pale blue. And then where are we? I came to the conclusion that the best scheme was to get one of the very same machines that the demonstrators were running. I had learned that was the thing to do when buying those little tin automobiles that go around in circles on the pavement in Twenty-third Street—the fresh ones in the boxes never run at all—but Mrs. Haverly dashed my hopes by saying theirs was originally such a one (second hand, John meanly calls it), and that she had named it "The Flea" because it hopped about so, though it skimmed the earth like a bird when the agent had the creature.

This discouraged me, and I grew annoyed with John, who wouldn't make a choice, and kept going about in ten thousand dollar French cars whose names he couldn't pronounce, much less pay for. I felt that if he kept it up much longer he'd become so attached to the park and Riverside that he wouldn't go away at all, and then how could I get my divorce? (John resents my saying "my" divorce; he wants me to say *our* divorce, claiming that he is to be divorced just as much as I am. John is growing very frivolous.) Finally he said he would leave it to me to suggest a way, since I found fault with his "painstaking investigations," and,

greatly to his surprise, I hit upon a splendid plan—upon several plans, in fact, and all of them without any troublesome riding around in the cars themselves. One was to buy the cheapest machine and another was to buy the most expensive; but we simply couldn't afford the latter, and the cheapest has such ugly "lines" I could never have gone about in it with any degree of comfort. Riding in a good-looking car is just like wearing good clothes; the consciousness of having on or being in something elegant gives one the courage to drive good bargains without losing one's self-respect—and that is a lot in Europe. Therefore we decided it would be economy to pay a fair price. One rainy night, when we couldn't go out to talk automobile even, John and I were poring over the advertisements in the back of the magazines, and noticing how splendidly all the machines were running, never once getting on the margin, and I suggested that we take the car that had the happiest people riding in it—in the advertisements, not in the street, of course. The very happy ones in the street go so fast one can't see how happy they are until they get up to the big mounted policeman at the entrance to the park, and then they are arrested and don't look happy at all. But in all the magazines the very happiest people were a colour (that sounds like poor English, but it's right) I could not endure; besides, John, in endeavouring to manipulate one at its agency, had knocked off his own hat and in some wonderful way

ran over it, and as it was a new derby, it embittered John a great deal, and he has never cared for the "mechanism of the engine" since. So we gave that up. Then I said:

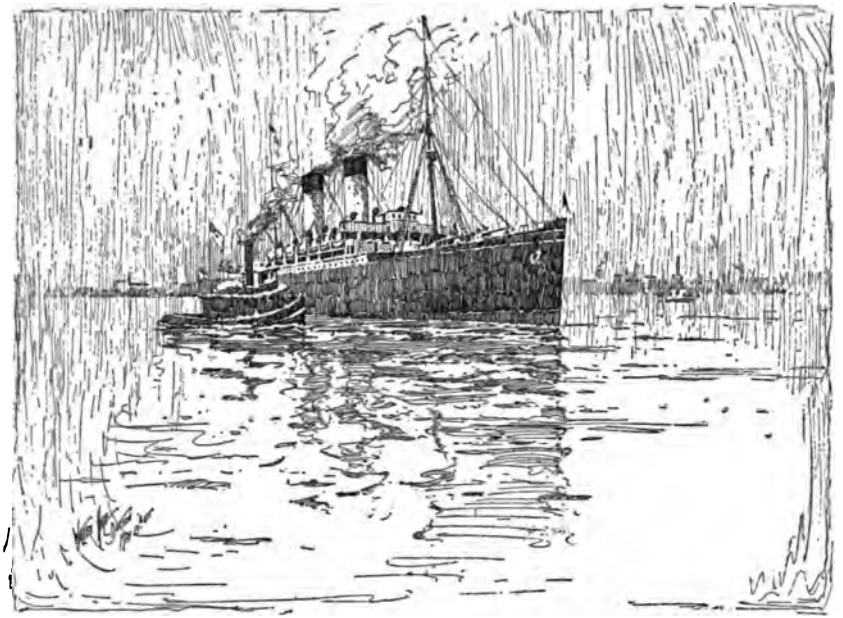
"Now, John, let us take the car that has the best 'ad.' You have an advertising concern, and it ought to be an incentive to business men in the future to spend money on their form of inducement."

The idea seemed to please John, but I could see that he was influenced by the "catch phrases" his own firm had sent out, so I took the book away from him, prayed for a sign, shut my eyes, turned two pages, described a circle with my finger, put it down on the page, opened my eyes, and "Silent as the Stars" blinked into my face. John was generous, though it wasn't his advertisement; he said it sounded well, and what seemed to impress him even more, that it was a good machine, and when he looked at the price he said it was a "corker." I didn't sleep much that night, I felt so near to my divorce—our divorce—and the very next morning as I was starting out shopping, who should come gliding up to me but John—and in it—and it was!

It was "Silent as the Stars," I mean. I just gasped with delight, and the polite demonstrator had me in the back seat in half a second, and away we went, tooting the horn at every street crossing, because we *were* so quiet. "It's pretty good," said John to me; "I think it will do us, Peggy."

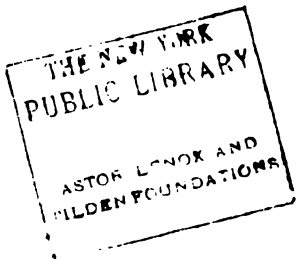
"Very well," I replied; "but be sure to find out *if* it has a back kick."

Of course it hadn't, and there are several other things to recommend it besides its catch phrase and the absence of the kick. "It's so simple a woman can run it." Which is meant to be an inducement, but is really an insult to my sex, and I would never dare tell the Minerva Club how pleased I am. Moreover, a man does not have to lie down under the car very often when it gets out of order, *if* it ever does, *which* it never does. Then there are no jiggers to pull at the sides, so that one doesn't have to keep his hands going like a xylophone player in the orchestra, and while his feet will have some quick stepping to do, it's really nothing compared to playing on a church organ, and then only short trips within stretching distance. In truth, it's as good a means as we have seen. Of course, I take no particular interest in it beyond its being The Means, and I shall probably never even work the horn, but it's my selection, and I take a natural pride in my good judgment. Then this agency atmosphere is pleasantly exciting, and when I think it might never have happened had I not met and married John, and in consequence felt the necessity of leaving him by the motor-car route, I can hardly thank him enough. He is still very strict about my telling anyone, and with the club denied me, and so much going on in my breast, I feel like a thirty horse-power "Silent as the Stars" shut up in a hall bedroom. John is



BOSTON

"They ran down the 'blue peter' as the boat swung into the stream"


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tooting frantically below for me to come down and see him turn around. He seems to have to go clear up on the curbing, yet hasn't hurt the front steps a bit.

He's so skilful!

Chapter III

We're on the boat! There came a moment when I thought we had better give it up altogether and not attempt to grow broad, or live beyond our age, or have any aspiration in life higher than a good closet wherein to hang our skirts—my skirts. That was when none of John's socks would mate, and the wrong laundry arrived with twenty-three collars for him, size twelve and a half, and I had twice packed the letter of credit at the bottom of the trunk. Then John came in and reminded me that there had been such a moment preceding every trip we had ever taken, and yet we had always managed to get away, and that it was only part of the burden that goes with packing, and particularly the result of the actions of the socks. They have a habit, he said, of wandering off and hiding under chairs, utterly heedless of their rightful mates, thinking all the time they are making splendid matches, and in their silly grammar way believing if two negatives make a positive, that two lefts ought to make a right, which is the same way some people feel, concluded John, who by this time had picked up all the odd little socks lying lonesomely about, and rolled them up tightly with their runaway companions, and the boy came back with the right laundry, so we are on the boat.

That wasn't the end of my troubles, nor of John's.

My particular difficulty was the choice of the diary. I was so afraid I might forget to secure one that I flew down to Stern's at a quarter of six one evening and bought a dreadful affair with an embossed cover of golden hearts, happily interlocked. Grown calmer, I could just see that diary in court with a sniggering jury pawing over it, so I exchanged it, or, rather, got a credit, as they didn't have anything I liked there, and took a shirt-waist instead—which I shall always hate. After that, I went across the street and bought a beautiful red one with a key that didn't work. Unfortunately, John opened the parcel when it came home, and though he controlled his feelings nobly, I realised that anything so gay in colour might seem as though I was rejoicing over my evidences of his brutality instead of finding it a cause for deep grief, and that it might not only hurt John, but weaken my case. I told a fib, and said they had sent the wrong one. I had ordered a black cover, and was going to have my initials put on. I thought that would please him, but "Better leave off the last letter," said John, kindly; "you might want to use it over again." John is sometimes too kind, and while I've said nothing more to him, I've now a bright green one, and it's left to him in my will.

We have both made our wills, taken out accident policies, insured the car, and are all ready for a good time. Most of this has been done at the instigation of our friends, and surely only those with a

Set Purpose such as ours could continue their arrangements with undampened ardour. John gets almost angry sometimes. He maintains that a man who can make a success in one line of business can make it in another. "And if it's a question of intelligence, I think I stand as fair a chance as those chauffeur chaps, who know little else, and are most of them broken-down bicycle sports who have simply moved from two wheels to four as a means of living."

"My grandfather was a good mechanic," continued John, "and I'm a good advertising man; with Peggy's keen sagacity to lend itself as a pathfinder, we'll have no trouble." I smiled—that was because I didn't know what a pathfinder was—and our friends smiled the kind of a smile that goes up at one corner, wrung our hands silently and sent us several bottles of rye whiskey and a travelling clock. The bottles and the travelling clock were recklessly wrapped together in a shawl strap, fell out going up the gangway, with all the passengers looking on, and were broken, John and I moving on without a tremor, as though the paraphernalia belonged to the clerical gentleman back of us. So there was nothing left to bother about much in the matter of impedimenta except the crazy quilt. Years ago, when I was a tiny girl, an old nurse started me on a crazy quilt. She said the fine thing about it was, I could always keep adding something on; "anything at all, anything at all," she would croon, and continue clipping bits of hair and sash ribbons from all of us

children as we played about her. Hers had grown to twelve square feet, I remember, on the day they put her in the Asylum for the Infirm in Mind. She went quite gently, with her quilt under her arm, and her last word to me was a charge to keep adding on, "anything at all, anything at all." With her as a doubtful example in my mind, I did not "add on" as rapidly during my childhood as I might have done, but outgrowing the fear of her twelve-foot-square finish, I decided to take the quilt along to "piece" while sitting by pleasant roadsides on those rare occasions when John would find it necessary to halt and tinker about the car. I thought it would be interesting in after years to point out to the little children at my knee (my sister's children, I suppose) a certain scrap of blue, and recall the day when I, still in Bondage, watched a certain Mr. Ward lie on his back in the fine white Roman road and look up at a long shaft which did everything but go. John, who doesn't care for my imagining—it seems to bore him—says my quilt will be utterly useless, but is otherwise pleased to see how sensible I am in the matter of limiting my wardrobe—and his. Of course I shall have to have some pretty things, and a trunk is as easy to carry as a lot of bags, so the tonneau of the car has been taken out entirely and our big wicker hamper will be strapped in its place; a deck basket is at one side and a wooden tool chest ornaments the other, with "two of everything," like the Coster girl's outfit, while all around the car are rear,

head and search lights, and festoons of extra tires. Why, when the lamps are going at night we look quite like a travelling strawberry festival! One thing that we haven't, and ought to have, it seems to me, is a canopy. John says it won't rain, not because it isn't the rainy season (though it happens not to be), but because we haven't a top. I never saw such faith. If the auto had half of it we could cross the Atlantic "under our own steam," with John walking along behind pushing it over the highest waves.

We are on one of the Boston boats. We generally go that way, and the second day out, before we are acquainted at all, we ask one another why in the world we sail from a one-horse port with a whole row of ships practically at our front door in New York. Then we remember that we prefer this line, because the run is broken by stopping at the Azores, the first outpost of the Old World, and Gibraltar; and after that we grow contented, like the people, the discipline on the ship and the ginger snaps at the afternoon tea. If John and I can only recall why we do things, we do not reproach ourselves with any of our eccentricities. "There ought to be a reason for it," says John, and then I think up one and we are happy. We had a hard time two years ago trying to remember why he threw business to the winds and flew over to Siena with me for the month of January, but one cold evening as we hovered over a *scaldino* in an ancient palace bedroom,

I traced the whole movement back to the day that Rookey Vedder told us of his brother's wife, who had an aunt living there who had a butler for four dollars a month; after that, John said it would be extravagance for us to stay on in New York and burn up gas. "And so it would have been," said John, when I had reminded him. "Come hither, minion" (this to the porter); "fetch more coals for the *scaldino*." And we were perfectly happy.

John, accompanied by a friend, drove The Means up to Boston, taking it leisurely, with one night in Hartford. I was very uneasy for fear of accident, and dreadfully offended Mrs. Haverly's mother by speaking of her son's broken leg as a compound puncture; if she had known how near I came to asking if he would lose his tire, she would have appreciated my powers of concentration. However, John didn't have one, nor the tires either, and he arrived thinking very well of himself. I came on by Sound steamer, and drove to the dock with the trunk, steamer luggage, the shawl strap of rye and a few hundred last thoughts tied with pieces of string to my hand bag. John said he was ashamed to acknowledge me, but he wasn't much to boast of in the way of looks himself, for the carpenters were boxing up The Means for its trip, and John had been covering the brasswork, and himself, with grease to prevent rust. We had hoped to lash the car in the hold to avoid the cost of crating, but the dock superintendent refused to ship it in such fashion, and that ex-

pensive vehicle cost us $35 for the wooden bunk it slept in, and $35 for its steerage cabin, without even a daily tin dish of spaghetti, nor a draught of chianti as a method of getting even. They used a great deal of good lumber, though, which we can have after the car is unboxed in Naples, and we spend much of our time deciding what we will do with all that timber. John said if we didn't have a motor car to run about we could make a little cottage of it and settle down somewhere along the Mediterranean. "A handful of nails, some fancy shingles, and there you are!" And the ship's doctor decided it would be well to put it on wheels and hitch it behind as a sort of summer house, so that we could go in when it rains.

"If we did that," I said, "I don't think we would know enough."

"Enough?" he puzzled.

"Enough to go in when—" but never mind; it wasn't much of a joke, though he is still pondering.

However, he is a nice doctor and can play the piano. All ship's surgeons are nice and can play the piano. I wonder which credential the company asks for first—a diploma or a scale. There is probably a Marine Conservatory for Music, Medicine and Manners somewhere around Liverpool that turns them out well equipped for a life on the ocean wave. And apart from the glory of brass buttons, it must be very pleasant to be a man of letters, as it were, with B.A. on the cabin wall, A.B. in one's lurch-

ing gait and M.D. on one's card. The doctor is not the only diversion on shipboard; we are all of us stepping aside to laugh at one another, quite unmindful of our own funninesses. My bursts of enjoyment interest John, who doubts my sense of humour, and calls it one-sided. He once said when I had given him a splendid imitation of himself trying to be polite to a wealthy aunt and still escape for a drink that if I could see myself with that same keen appreciation of the ludicrous I reserve for other people, I would die laughing. That was the deepest remark John ever made, and I was able to dismiss it from my mind only by repeatedly assuring myself that he had no knowledge of its true import.

Only perfectly proper things happen on the ocean steamers. One can get acquainted with anybody and still be a lady or gentleman, but on the Sound boats it's most incorrect, and I often wonder why these Cupid's footpads, as George Meredith calls them, don't take an ocean trip and get their fill of meeting people without an introduction. It's very simple. After two days out the young man in the reefer runs against the girl in the raglan where the promenade is narrow up in the bow, and instead of stepping aside with a faraway look in his eyes, as on the first day, he lifts his cap to her faint smile, and says, "Quite a beam sea;" she, nothing loath, doesn't know what a beam sea is, but is willing to learn, and the next night they are singing college

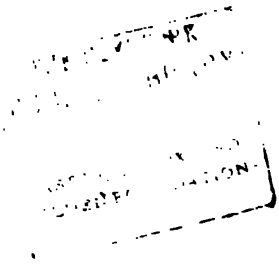
glees under the bridge on the hurricane deck. It's a mistake to know anyone at the first dinner; the passengers are an entirely different set on the second day out, and one never sees the original crowd until the ship's concert—clothes and waves make such a difference in people. I remember my surprise one summer to find that the strong man who jumped me over the breakers was the same graceful creature who danced with me every evening, names never being one of my strong points. But it's even worse on shipboard. New people keep crawling up over the sides of the ship every day, like mer-ladies and gentlemen, and all very cunning, pretending they've been on from the time the boat left the harbour, and so hurt because one can't recall them. "Great Scott! When did he come aboard?" John will exclaim after the fifth day when some peculiar type comes ambling along, and the most mysterious part of it all is, I may have seen him on the very day of sailing, cheerily shoving his weeping family down the gangway. It's only the stay-at-homes who cry; the go-aways never do.

One young man was so in evidence that I kept track of him from the moment of departure. He was very much on deck at the sailing hour saying farewell to anyone who caught his eye, and wringing John's hand three times in his excitement. He was full of mistakes, but didn't seem to mind. "Goodbye, old Glory," he shouted sentimentally, when they ran down the "blue peter" as the boat swung into



PONTA DELGADA

"The Azores, the first outpost of the Old World"



the stream, and when John chuckled and the boy saw his error he laughed too, and swore the setting sun behind him was in his eyes. He was a dear boy named Robert Robbins, in a beautiful yachting cap, and came from somewhere inland; but he was very good at doing one up in rugs; "cruised about old Michigan a bit," he said, and found the ocean swell he'd heard such a lot about an awful hoax. "I want to see the racks on the table," he complained one day at luncheon; "this is just like the lake." Then he took a look at a piece of pork that he had ordered from the steward, and he went away with all "the love-light for me," as John said, gone out of his eyes, and I have never seen him since, but I hear that he lost his beautiful yachting cap overboard.

"Did it blow off?" I asked John.

"No; I think it fell off," John answered.

There is a minister with us who has so long been a leader of his flock that he tries to discipline the whole boat. He carries his pulpit with him like a sort of ecclesiastical snail, and continually exhorts from it. His "long suit" (John's phrase, and speaking from the standpoint of cards, not vestments) is planning routes. He not only knows where he wants to go in Europe, but where all the rest of us want to go, or ought to want to go if we don't. Maps are his passion. As soon as he sees one in the hands of some old lady gently picking out Rome, he wrests it away and traces her a

up his trip to the Tyrol and st
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The nervous man adds greatly
He makes the voyage each year f
he says, "to get away from ev
spends his days hanging over the
for things in the water or on the
been the first to discover land on
ever made, he tells me; he can fee
before the crew can, deep-sea gulls
and yet he's never had any luck
seem to avoid him. Porpoises, yes
to see the porpoises, and generally
phorus in the Gulf Stream, but "
I can't see a whale gets me," he unl
last year I saw two planks floatin
side of the vessel—looked as thoug
come off a derelict. I was the

and can you believe it, while I was gone a big whale spouted, spouted, they told me, not a hundred yards from the ship. It don't seem right, and I was on an errand of mercy, too." I felt so sorry for him that I painted a sweet little whale on the lens of our binoculars; just the back of him, of course, so that in looking through the glasses he seemed to be way off in the waves. I had it spouting as well as I could in water colours, which run so, though John said I should have done it in oils if it was to be a sperm whale, but my friend the artist didn't have any out. Then I called the little nervous man, and I gave him a glimpse of my fish casually, as though I thought it was a piece of seaweed. He emitted a glad cry of "there she blows!" and went "gallumphing" off to the smoking room, generously eager to share his find. By the time they had all come stampeding out I had wiped off the lens, and while there was some scepticism, the nervous man had me to support his assertion. His original one, that is, for it grew tremendously, and by nightfall had become three whales engaged in a fierce battle over a dead shark.

I spoke just now of my artist friend. His name is Douglas Warwick, and I hope it's copyrighted, for some actor surely will get hold of it and star in a romantic drama composed of duels and a drinking scene. He is perfectly clean, but his clothes do not worry him; nor do any of the externals of life, not even food. (I have seen the most impressionistic

artists wake up at food.) At some meals he eats and at some meals he talks, but he never does both at the same time, and on the days he talks Mrs. Baring carries off a lot of biscuit and puts them in his pocket. Everybody looks after him—I don't know why; just as John looks after me—not that I demand it, but that I get it. John says there are those in life who give and those who receive; that it's his only chance of being among the blessed, so he makes the most of it with me. But he rather despises the feebleness of Douglas Warwick, yet all the time tells him when his pipe is out, and when he's sitting on his cap.

The artist is going to straggle around the country as he listeth, and Mrs. Baring, with her companion, plain Miss Grey in name, colour and attitude in life, is to travel in an auto, just as we are going, and over much the same route. She is tremendously interesting to John, on account of her motoring, of course, though she is very good looking, too. She is large, finely built and very glisteny—shiny hair, I mean, and well-scrubbed skin, and white teeth that flash when she smiles, not tigerishly, but in a friendly way, and just as much at me as at John. There is everything about her that one likes, or ought to like, and my only objection is that there is too much of her. It makes me feel the powder on my nose is showing, and that my small vanities are much smaller than usual. John began chatting with her the second night across the table. I came in late,

just as she was saying, "A Martini for me every time." I thought it was a little unusual as a beginning, but I said I preferred a Manhattan; and then they both laughed, and John ordered the insidious cocktails, though it seems they were talking of her motor. She doesn't carry it over to America, as she thinks the roads are too bad for comfortable travel, and "might hurt its poor, dear feet," so it has a mysterious way of meeting her on the other side, "and then we go for nice gallops." She talks on like that in a healthy, motherly, horsey way, and no one thinks she's foolish—and as for John! He says he glows with pride when he sees an American woman with the strength to start her own engine, just as if that muscular attribute was the crowning glory to a sanctified life.

I asked John if he thought I ever could, and he roughed my pompadour over my eyes and said not to bother, that it wasn't worth while. That hurt me; he means I would no sooner learn to "crank the car," as he calls it, than there would be no car to crank—for me. It is only in these little instances that John seems to be aware of the shadow that is hovering over him. For my part, I have done my best to dispel all thought of our mission while on the sea, to record in no way any peculiarity of his that might go against him, and I must say that with one exception he has behaved admirably. That exception was the naming of the car.

Mrs. Baring is a widow, a "sod" one, and having

lost him in the conventional way, she enjoys having her fling at less fortunate couples like myself and John, although she is from Chicago, and it ought to be an old story to her. One evening she told us of the delegation of manufacturers' wives from Birmingham, England, that she lunched one day at the Annex while the husbands were following up a pig at an abattoir, and of the wife who had asked, when they had all become quite familiar along with the *crème de menthe*, if she had ever met, personally, a divorced woman. "I had to collect myself a minute," said Mrs. Baring, "which I trust was put down as an effort to speak the truth, before I admitted a slight acquaintance with one of that class of females, but the most delicious part of it all is," and she flashed her teeth straight at us, "this is the first dinner table at which I have dared repeat my story without treading on toes." We all laughed, "heartily," I think it is called, but I dared not look at John. And all the time down in the dark hold was the dark Means.

Then that artist, Douglas Warwick, stopped eating, and without any reason for doing so beyond the dangerous meddlesome quality possessed by all weaklings, asked me the name of our car. "They all seem to be christened," he continued mildly. "Mrs. Baring's is the Dago, I believe."

"Yes, Martini is an Italian name, you know," flashed Mrs. Baring. "What is yours, Mrs. Ward?"

John and I gulped. We had never thought of naming our car beyond unconsciously referring to it as The Means, but how could I announce that without the inevitable explanation, and if not that, then what? It must all be done so quickly, and why didn't John speak up? He was actually leaving it to me. Then I thought of what the Indians do—how they name their babies after the first object the father sees when he steps from his tent. I looked up; a child was being towed unwillingly to bed—a child, well, why not?

"Girlie is its name," I breathed.

Even the artist saw it didn't fit, and I as soon as he did. Mrs. Baring behaved as well as a woman half humour, half muscle could. "Very unusual," she murmured. I turned to John. I thought as I did so how instinctive it was to turn to him when troubled. John caught the imploring look in my eyes.

"Yes, we like it," said John. "We had thought of naming it Boreas, since it is a Northern, and it really does fly like the wind, Mrs. Baring"—this with a sort of pitiful eagerness—"but later we, that is, I decided upon Girlie, and so, of course, Girlie it is."

As soon as dinner was over I walked straight to the bow with him. I knew our stateroom would be too near to everything, and too limited; and all the time one-half of my brain was saying if John went on doing heroic things like this I should never be

able to get my divorce, and the other half was saying, "Fool, fool, fool to want to." Before we left the bow, however, I felt more assured as to the evidence I could produce in court, and more willing to produce it. It wasn't so much the violence of his language—John is never violent—but the reiteration that got on my nerves. "My beautiful big car," he kept groaning over and over. "My beautiful big car a Girlie! Oh, Lord! A Girlie!"

I tried to comfort him. "If you say the word over very rapidly, John, 'Girlie, Girlie, Girlie,' about twenty times, it doesn't sound weak at all, but rather reminds one of a hand-organ."

It was a wasted argument. "Trick of the mind," he gloomed back. "And I don't care if it reminds one of a Viking or a spring onion; that's nothing to me so long as it's a motor car, and a fine big motor car, too, shooting around the country by the name of Girlie. Girlie, oh, Lord!" And off he went again.

I finally reminded him that we could at any time return to the name for which it had been purchased; that personally it was never so surely The Means as at the present moment. Then I went back to my deck chair, and John followed in an hour and apologised.

I forgave him, and by lemonade and sandwich time we were quite friendly once more. But way back in my head there was a feeling of resentment towards something, somebody. I endeavoured to



NAPLES
"Along the shopping district of Santa Lucia"

THE NEW YORK
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trace this mental aversion, and watched my brain carefully when that troublesome Douglas Warwick came around—the back of my head did nothing at all. We talked of various matters, eventually of motor cars, of Italian motor cars—and the back of my head "sat up." It was a surprising thing, and I was ashamed of my brain. Why this antipathy toward inanimate motors; for instance, towards Mrs. Baring's motor. Towards Mrs. Baring's—my brain positively wiggled, and I believed my case was diagnosed.

But why a motor?

Chapter IV

An American should always enter Italy with Naples as the open door—the door is so widely open and the welcome is so vociferous. A stranger to the country rather likes this; he thinks it characteristic, is very cheerful over discomforts for the first week, talks a good deal about the warmth of colour, and exchanges pennies for fleas with the utmost good humour. Although he doesn't know it, the whole Neapolitan attitude is embodied in the gentleman of fortune who swims out to greet us. He is beautiful in tone, wonderfully bronzed and built; he is graceful and eager to please, and he cavorts around the boat bellowing "Money," with the "o" like that in morn. First he only dives for a *lira*, which is almost twenty cents, but later he will crawl along the bottom of the sea for a *soldo*, which is a penny, and when the coppers slacken he becomes a sea lion and attracts another rain of coin by emitting dreadful cries.

Getting one's traps off the lighter and into the custom-house develops most curious traits. All the men and women who have shaken hands and exchanged cards and promised to look one another up in Rome half an hour before, wade around knee deep in June and luggage, staring at each other with unseeing eyes, and stealing a porter from a right-hand

dinner companion without the slightest hesitancy. As soon as they are through the customs their manners return, and they hang out of the little victorias and cry, "Dear, dear, can't you get your stuff?" and leave you frothing. The artist got away first, an old gentleman finding his large portmanteau for him in self-defence, since he was absent-mindedly going off with the poor, elderly dear's bag because it weighed the same. When he once got his pack on his back, he walked right through the customs, forgetting to put it down, so was undisturbed by the astonished officials.

Mrs. Baring's car was waiting for her with a chauffeur, whom she left behind with Miss Grey to look after her things, and drove Douglas Warwick up to his hotel, flashing me a good-bye as I was assuring the officials I never used tobacco in any form, and that we had none with us, although, to tell the truth, all of John's coat sleeves were packed with little tin boxes for friends in Capri, which I simply would not declare. The whole thing is unreasonable and should not be countenanced, and, as I told John, who doesn't like to have me swear to a lie, in such a case it is never the money, but the principle of the thing with me.

Poor John, what a day for him! I drove to the hotel with the luggage, lunched, walked along the shopping district of Santa Lucia, to learn how much coral had gone up, returned, and, not finding him, drove to the docks to see if he had as yet

escaped the customs with the car. I picked him out at the wharf by the crowd around him. He was looking older and some wiser, but the auto was uncrated and ashore. It had been taken off on a lighter and towed up the bay by rowboats at all four corners, and swimmers gambolling around like dolphins for the rich signor's money.

"You'd have thought it was a water carnival, Peg," he told me as we sat in the auto and waited for gasoline. "A queer craft with four husky men rigged up in red sashes to entice the German steamer just in, followed in our wake screeching 'Santa Lucia,' a flower-boat with bouquets on long poles, which they waved around me, went before, and a sort of barge, cooking wiggly devil-fish, brought up the rear. All the little shipping in the harbour got gay and saluted us, while I sat on the top of the crate as pink as a peony, pretending to be lost in thought, and this 'mut' standing at our side now started a cheer from the shore."

The "mut" smiled pleasantly as John indicated him by a gracious wave of the hand, and asked for money of the rich gentleman who spoke in the courteous foreign tongue.

"When we got ashore," John continued, "the clerk of the steamship line, who has clung to me like a brother and is evidently preparing to sting me, trotted me up to the customs, where we saluted all round, and I paid two dollars for the privilege of displaying my signature, while, in the meantime, an

officer had been sent for from the barracks, who charged me a like sum for watching the car. I don't know why. I don't want him to watch it; five hundred other men are doing the same thing and not charging a cent. If I had the true spirit of my Yankee ancestors I'd take up a collection for giving them such a pleasant day. This man seems to be called Guardy, but I don't know whether it's his first or last name, so can't introduce you. Here, you flat face" (calling him), "this is my signora, *mia sposa*, otherwise wife. Smile at him, Peggy; he may take something off."

I smiled, and Guardy took off his hat, but kept the two.

"After that," said John, when these amenities had been exchanged with the poor fellow, who was a good watchdog, but, fortunately, no linguist, "I was given a splendid chance to pay one hundred and twenty-five *lire*, twenty-five dollars, isn't it? Yes, and dirt cheap, they tell me, compared to France. That's the cost of the lead seal on the steering wheel and front spring, and if I don't lose them I get my money back on the frontier of Italy going north. They charge by the springs—the more springs you have, the more it costs. I suppose taking a comfortable bedspring into the country would wreck even a millionaire."

"John, don't be absurd," I interrupted, "go on with the truth." The mob had closed in upon us and were listening to our meaningless words with eager

attention. John observed this and became oratorical, flinging his arms around and making elaborate Fourth of July gestures.

"Then, my friends and dearly beloved wife, they asked me questions, and such questions! Questions as to my age and the age of *mia sposa* here, questions as to my habits and general conduct in life; did I wear flannels in winter and a silk hat on Sunday afternoons? Questions as to my intentions on my visit to this fair boot-shaped land, and lastly, oh, my friends and little Peggy, questions as to my ability to run a motor car, *this* after two full weeks of experience. *This*, gentlemen of Naples, from you to me."

The crowd crowed with delight, Guardy was torn between a salute and an arrest, and I was anxiously beseeching John to tell me if he had betrayed our divorce proceedings with the rest of the reckless exposé, when the gasoline arrived—in a cab, under the gentle guidance of the steamship agent. John quieted down, and the multitude gave way for the big tin; the funnel was brought out with a flourish, the strainer was produced, and the tank was filled. I leaned over and a few drops splashed on my glove—I rubbed them off, but a dark stain was left on the kid. When the tiresome performance was over, John put on his gauntlets, fastened up his coat, for night was coming on, and cranked the car. The engine made an idle revolution! Again, and again, and again. The path that Guardy had made closed

up, he himself regarding it as a road not likely to be travelled in the near future. I watched John's tired face anxiously—we were strangers in a strange land, and night was coming on. "There's something wrong," he finally said. "You had better take a cab, Peggy."

"I'll not," I replied in passionate sympathy, and with a courage born of desperation I turned to the crowd and besought to know if anyone present spoke better English than did John and I Italian. The only response was a visible movement of surprise occasioned by the thought that we spoke Italian at all. The moment's silence was followed by the sound of wheels, and from the edge of the throng came the voice of a good samaritan as he hurriedly descended from a carriage: "If you will excuse," he said, "I speaka the English most poor, but I, too, have *automobili.*" He approached the car and examined it deftly. "Is all prepared, signor?" This to John.

"Yes," John answered, "all oiled, the water in, and the tank full of ten gallons of gasoline, what is it you call it? Oh, yes, *petrolio.*"

The samaritan threw up his hands. "Of what?" he gasped. And then in a true Italian rush of words, "Ah, signor, that eesa it. *Petrolio* in Italy is kerosena, what one demands here is *benzina*, you geta that, signor, *benzina.* Now you havea your work to again *ancora*, also it eesa bad for the moteur that theesa oil get een. I senda my man for *benzina*, no troub, beleef me. I also have *automobili.*"

An hour later we passed under the Porta Capuana and wound our way through the city to the garage near our hotel. "Peggy," said John, "the Masons need a button to identify them, but the toot of a horn is enough for my fraternity."

It has been made plain to me that the excellence of a hotel is to be judged by its proximity to a garage. This is a very good hotel, being right across the street from the courtyard where we house The Means. John can see the gleam of the lamps through the archway from his window, which is a constant satisfaction to him, and we are so altogether comfortable that we have stayed on for several days. I think John wishes to delay the "proceedings," for he proposed the visit to Capri, and it pleases me that he wants to keep me with him as long as possible; naturally, the estrangement will begin with the motor trip proper. So I am very nice and wear my prettiest gowns, and we go on little motor trips into the country, Douglas Warwick, and Mrs. Baring, too, and often Miss Grey.

I feel that I have done Miss Grey an injustice in disposing of her so briefly. She certainly is her name, but so thoroughly her name that writers of quiet, lavender-scented books could turn her into two volumes. Mary Wilkins might have created her, and I asked if it could possibly be true, but she answered me quite seriously and said: "No, her mother's name was Tucker." Not having any definite ideas of her own, she has bought a guide-book



NAPLES
"We passed under the Porta Capuana"

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that covers the whole of Italy, on which she pins her faith, no matter how glaringly in error it may be. "I am obliged to believe in it, my dear," she will say, "this book has cost me a great deal of money."

It is one of the nice traits of Mrs. Baring's character that she is so kind to her, and just in the same tolerant way does she put up with Douglas Warwick. His helplessness must try her soul, and I endeavour to share the burden, and take him off her hands when I can, so as to let the two motorists crawl around their cars on their hands and knees and enjoy themselves in their own fashion. He makes pencil sketches of me on these excursions, and Miss Grey finds out how old the stones are against which we lean, and it's all very pleasant—but dangerously softening.

Perhaps it is the climate that occasions an inclination to let things go on as they are, and I sometimes ask myself if Italy is just the place for a divorce. When I stood on the balcony of the monastery of San Martino and looked down on the baked city, the curved bay, the dull, smoky mountain, and felt the bigness of it all, I had a pain down my nose, the tears came into my eyes and I felt a great desire not to stir up my little atom of peaceful living, but to be happy in being part of the Scheme.

It seemed a genuine and noble emotion, but it didn't last. The evening of that very same day when I hung over the terrace of the hotel that is high up in the air, with much the same view greet-

ing my eyes, I thought I should burst if I didn't amount to something very shortly. The sun had dropped heavily into the water, and lights were popping along the streets, twisted in and about below, the shadows of the lamp-posts making a black and white plaid of the well-swept roads. Vesuvius was doing some special fireworks in crimson glows, and, try as it might to be different, exhibiting the same colour with which the postal cards have splashed it, the Neapolitans were singing for their supper, and many others were eating theirs, the women wearing heavenly frocks, and some of them mindful of my lovely one, but none of them conscious of the chaos in my mind, or suspecting for an instant that the small blonde going in to dinner with the tall man had suddenly decided, owing to the compelling beauty of the scene, to give up typewriting when she was free and become the greatest actress in the world. It all seemed so simple, with the musicians singing Puccini's operas, that I was amazed I had never thought of it before.

But that was three nights ago. To-night it is raining, and I think I will have an office for typing, after all, with hours from eleven to three.

The rain is a most unusual occurrence at this time of the year, and arranged evidently by Jupiter Pluvius to show John Ward that the absence of a canopy to his motor car is not omnipotent in keeping away showers. This contempt for precedent, however, has put old Vesuvius into a fearful temper.

No one has been allowed up for several days, the farmers are leaving the higher slopes, for streams of molten lava are rolling down the sides, and the explosions that I at first took to be some midnight drill on the part of the English warships in the harbour occur with all the regularity of a military salute. It is a comforting thought that we are not tied down to a railway train in case we find hot ashes creeping into our daily lives, and, while it is not our intention to start to-morrow if the rain continues, that we *could* press on, and most willingly do so, even to the taking of a lively pleasure in water-soaked garments.

Whenever there is an especially vicious bombardment, I look out of the window to see how the natives are taking it, and if they are only normally active in their gesticulations, my alarm is quieted, while John, lacking a Nydia to act as barometer, gives hourly reports as to the passivity of the blind beggar on the corner. But the concierge says, "No one really knows except the fish," and, loving an excuse, we flew to the Aquarium this afternoon.

The habitants were swimming about tranquilly, and, as always happens with us, our delight in the wonders of the deep is heightened (if one can heighten a deep) by the wondrous visitors. All the queer Americans in the world meet at the Naples Aquarium, like calling unto like, and they go about among the curious fry contented, but unconscious of their kindred in the water. The guards get some

fun out of us. I see them watching us closely, for we never follow up the fish, only the visitors, and, after we have had our fill, meet in a dark corner and compare notes.

"The girl over there from the Central States," confided John to me to-day, "is very excited over a dark green lobster. Thinks it funny, but not as dressy looking as the red ones in New York." And he scudded back for more.

"There is a spinster-looking person going the rounds," I told John the next time we met, "who has all the fish classed as sweetly pretty and homely ones, while her friend refers to them as smooth or rough—she seems to prefer the rough ones."

"That's nothing," retorted John, "the disappointed lady is at hand. She says she's watched the coral for an hour, and it hasn't grown an inch; that the folded-up octopus looks like a piece of tripe; also the scallops are just like those at Shelter Island."

The next time I met John I couldn't speak for a moment. "Come home, John," said I, "we have reached the limit. The woman in the pink shirt waist just called me over hastily, but I reached her side too late. That big-finned fish—you know it, over there—had settled against a rock.

"'I'm real sorry,' she said, 'this fish was flying with such a funny gait, but now it's *sitting down.*'"

John and I were glad to have this little laugh, and I hope the aquariumates will not begrudge it, for

we returned from Capri this morning, very quiet in our minds, and with such a pain in our hearts for all the Capriotes. I don't know how New York would behave if it had Capri for a suburb—probably build a Dreamland or a Nightmare, and make the prices so prohibitive that the poor people would be driven away, but I hope the commuter appreciates it all, particularly the comfort of the little boats that run back and forth from Naples, and that he is not so familiar with the richness of the cerulean water as to liken it to the bluing tub on wash day, although it is a dreadful truth. I think the *habitués* of Capri love their island, and I know Francesco did, and this is the beginning of my story.

Francesco drove us up from the Marina Grande on our first visit, and he has driven us up ever since, with the same *buono cavallo* in the shafts of his little victoria, and all three of them as young as on the day we first met. That is because they kept young in their hearts, even to the little victoria, which enjoyed a daily rubbing as did the good horse Macaroni, and that keeps the ugly scars—the wear of travel—off both of them.

Time was when Francesco spoke no English, but on our trips through the island we conversed freely in the universal language of enjoyment. "*Molta bella,*" he would cry at the top of every high ridge, and we would echo him at least twice before he would go on. Francesco brought the strangers up in the way they should go. Always when we shared our

bread and cheese with Francesco, Francesco shared his share with Macaroni, a noble animal who could lunch upon thistles or eat a five-course dinner, including wine, with the happy *insouciance* peculiar to his race.

The three were there to greet us as we touched the wharf, only two days ago, and Francesco himself carried our luggage to that hotel where the walls and door panels bear the handiwork of visiting artists, rich in gratitude, but poor in purse. It may have been the very pretty housemaid that caused this excessive zeal, but he lingered by the gate to chat with her, lingered so long, in fact, that the signora called her in sharply.

"It was not well," she explained to us. "Francesco is a good boy, but had married in the last year, and though the wife was a virago from Napoli, still was he married, and Domenica should not give the gossips a chance. There was enough of that on the island among the strangers." And the signora rolled her eyes to express the condition of all lotus-eating colonies.

That evening we spent at the *palazzo* of a friend —the palace with the two eyeholes cut in the courtyard door, and, as Mr. Kipling says, "that's another story." Many years ago an Englishman of title, pensioned there by relatives at home, adopted the pleasing habit after deep imbibing, of calling upon his acquaintances with fewer garments than the social law allowed, and the signora of this certain

casa caused the holes to be made to avoid opening her doors to so unwelcome a guest.

On this story we touched, and many others of Capri, while "Vesuve" boomed in the distance, and the return to the hotel late at night through the tunnelled rock became a way of awesomeness. As we passed the clock tower in the square with the little guardhouse under it, we found soldiers in the doorway, and groups of men and women talking excitedly, the women crying and clinging to the men, with a lack of reserve seldom seen in public. At the hotel there were still lights. The hysterical moans of a girl were heard and the voice of the signora vibrating between admonition and consolation. She met us at the door tremulously eager, as we all are in life, to be the first to tell great news, good or bad.

It was of Francesco. He had been killed—by the *facchini*, he had been killed. Those wicked porters who come from Naples, because there are not enough to do the work in Capri. Never had the Capri people been so disgraced. They were a gentle race. Seldom were there killings on this island, and, as always, it was the woman. But this time so useless.

One of the *facchini* had told the wife about Francesco, and of his meetings with Domenica. She was a good girl—Domenica. Yes, the signora would swear to it, but the wife had spoken hotly to Francesco, and he hotly to her, and meeting the *facchino*, he had advised him to go about his business. Then the *facchino*, the villain from Naples, had gathered

five brother *facchini*, and as Francesco was rubbing down his horse, his *buono cavallo* Macaroni, in his little rock-hewn stable, the six had come in and stabbed him nigh to death and then ran out. Francesco crawled to the door, and the priest was called, —in time, thank the good Virgin, in time. "I love God and forgive my enemies," gasped Francesco to the *padre*, and died by the side of Macaroni. The dear, gentle boy, the brave, kind *ragazzo!* The signora was crying now, with us, and across the square in the little cell of the watchtower were the six porters, who had been caught as they were escaping in a small boat.

The next night at sunset Francesco was buried. First came the music which they all love, John's gift, then many little choir boys bearing tall, lighted candles, my offering, and after that the chanting priests, and, in a casket borne on the shoulders of four of his comrades, the body of Francesco. Only men attend a funeral in Italy, but I broke the custom, myself and a bent old crone, too full of years to heed the weary rules that govern life. Down through the narrow, winding ways they marched, gently lowering the casket to pass under the many arches that span the streets. Across the square, past the clock tower, where the *facchini* crouched in the little cell, and along the *molta bella* road which Francesco had travelled so many times before, the sea deep purple and the rocks all pink.

But the good horse Macaroni was not with him.

Chapter V

Now that we're in Rome, quite comfortable, I don't regret the three days spent in the effort to get here. There is something ennobling about an effort, especially after it's all over, and you have what you've been struggling for. Sometimes a man may demand too much, and then, of course, his efforts are deservedly useless, but it did seem a pity, when all we wanted was Rome, that we had to make such a fight for it.

We left Naples with dry skies, but wet pavements. John said he'd wear his raincoat just to get the wrinkles out of it, and I put mine on because it was becoming. The whole street was out to see us off, and the blind man must have had second sight, if not first, through his black glasses, for he buckled straps wonderfully.

It was a most gratifying start, and I bowed to the right and left, for I am to be the polite one on the trip. John has to look after the machine, and try not to run over the little boys who stand directly in the path and smile pleasantly at us. At first I feared we *would* kill one of these little boys, and now I fear we *won't*. I am sure they are not flesh and blood kiddies, but a sort of animal growth who never had a father or mother and who spring up between the cracks of the paving stones especially to con-

found motorists. I think they are the fiendish result of the concentrated thought of the cab drivers.

There is another class of boys, who may originally have had one parent, who play the hat-and-coat game. The hat-and-coat game consists in pulling off these coverings, and, with a wild shriek, throwing them under the wheels of the motor. If the car swerves violently the boys are delighted, but if the wheels go over the hat or the coat they are just as pleased, and seem to think the joke entirely on the man at the wheel whatever the outcome may be. When a motor learns not to shy at these things it has become well road-broken.

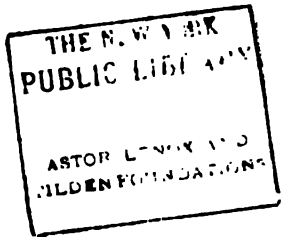
John and I expected to stop in Terracina for the night, which is half of the one hundred and seventy-five miles to Rome. The whole trip is easily made in a day, and less, but John when a boy wrote an essay on Washington Irving's Inn at Terracina, for which he received an abnormally high mark, and he wanted to stop over and see if he could find out how he happened to get it.

Mrs. Baring is going through, taking the day for it, and with her will be Douglas Warwick, leaving Miss Grey behind, because she wanted to see Virgil's tomb. Everyone told her that there was no proof of the tomb being Virgil's, but she said she would feel bad all her life in case it might turn out to be his after she had returned home, so Mrs. Baring gave her an extra day. The chauffeur who drove the car down to Naples has been sent back to Turin.



CAPRI

"The palace with the two eyeholes cut in the courtyard door"


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The *chatelaine* of Dago drives herself, sends the car to the garages in the cities, and trusts to mechanics and porters along the way to keep it in condition, she herself always superintending.

"The mind of a man!" says John solemnly. Then, naturally exhausted after paying a woman such a magnificent compliment, puts his pipe in his mouth and is silent.

Now I wouldn't give a fig to have a thing like that said about me, and it would be enough to ruin a débutante for life, but the third time he told me I waved my green diary at him in a carelessly hostile way, and watched the effect,—absolutely nothing happened. He just said that was a nice blank book, and did I intend to fill it. I replied that I probably *could* very easily, but a few pages would suffice, no doubt. This seemed to please him, and he begged me to keep it handy. Sometimes I can't make John out.

But to go back to Naples. We thought we were awfully clever to escape the curse of the Emperor's roads, the fine, white dust, and we forgot all about the fine white mud that would be there instead, until we began to skid, and slip, and crawl up that cruel Capo di Monte, flagged with big, square blocks. At the top there was a great deal of villainous *strada*, which was bad to go on, but much worse to stop on, and, of course, we did—stopped on it, I mean, just stopped in a sort of a quiet, determined way before we had gone ten miles.

I had prepared for the worst, but I did not expect it to happen so soon, and I looked at John to see if he was surprised. He gave no evidence, however, and I have since learned that this controlled visage is the True Automobile Face. We both got out, and John tested everything, and everything was all right, which was simply maddening. Then John said he had better get under the car, and I could begin on my crazy quilt.

Now up to that time I had been watching John very carefully for evidence and wondering if "Don't hold on to the seat like grim death, Peggy," would influence a jury, or if "For heaven's sake, dear, let the car take the hill—don't push it up with your nerves" would sound as brutal to them as it did to me. But when the car stopped and John was in trouble, even I, with no muscle at all and as unsportsmanlike as you please, could see it was no time for crazy quilts. I said I'd help him, which I couldn't, except to hand him the pincers when he wanted the screw driver; but with the aid of two little boys, the kind with both parents, I spread a tarpaulin on the muddy road, and one of the dears crawled under also and made a pillow with his hands for John's head.

Everything seemed very dismal, and I was much surprised to know how deliriously happy I had been a few minutes before. I'd had no idea of it at the time. Also I was surprised at my disinclination to notice the peasant carts that were passing us as we

had passed them back in the mud, while the peasants themselves were wearing the conscious look of restrained delight that all humanity enjoys when getting the best of it.

The toot of a horn so startled me that I dropped the monkey wrench on John's face (out of fairness will not record his ejaculation in my diary), and he squirmed out, half glad, half sorry, for the relief to the motorist in finding assistance at hand is embittered by the necessity of accepting it. The toot was followed up by a car, and in it was Mrs. Baring and Douglas Warwick.

"Why, it's your car," observed the artist, when they had drawn up alongside, and I had uttered some heavy flippancy about a pleasant day.

"Yes," said John, ruffled, "didn't think I'd run away with anybody else's, did you?" But the shot missed its mark.

"Can't you get on?" continued the newcomer, still seated, although Mrs. Baring had descended.

"Get on? Of course we can," roared John. "We're stopping here because we like the country, and because I was tired I got down under the auto to rest a little. Seems simple enough. Mud treatment, it is called, I believe. Get out of that dude car and try it. Come on. See if it isn't good for your rheumatism."

"But I haven't any rheumatism," expostulated the artist, and fortunately at this point Mrs. Baring, who had hastily examined our engine, threw herself

into the breach, and began an exhaustive discussion with John.

They were of one opinion. The nut which adjusts the needle valve had worked loose, and the result was a choked carbureter—a very mysterious expression, but with a respectable sound, so I let it go on. As far as I could make out, the next thing was to find the nut, and wondering if I would know one when I saw it, I searched the leather apron hung below the car; the little *Italiani* splashed around in the pools, returning triumphantly with a horseshoe; and the artist, with an honest desire to be cleared of all suspicion, showed us the contents of his pockets. John taking it as a peace overture, looked politely among the squeezed paint tubes and bad money, and picked out the nut.

"That?" queried the artist in surprise. "Why I found that in your little garage courtyard two days ago."

They sped ahead as we rearranged ourselves.

"My nut," grumbled John, when we were under way once more. "And in his pocket. Just let them get at his head. There's where they grow."

At late luncheon we were so elated over having arrived somewhere that John called the waiter, and told him his handkerchiefs were very good. The waiter thanked him and did not laugh, knowing that John probably meant the green beans—the words are distressingly alike. Some of our friends think us sluggards because we have acquired so little

Italian, but we blame it entirely upon the countrymen themselves. It is so much easier to say eight wrong words, two right ones, flap the hands about a little, and be immediately understood than it is to worry over the profound subjunctive and, who knows, perhaps the elusive ablative as well.

Sometimes we are nearer the truth than we intend. When our second halt came, John said to a passing farmer, in a most impressive fashion, "I am unpleasant," meaning that he was displeased. The passing farmer said, "No, no, signor," but had he understood John's other explosions preceding this milder utterance, he would have thought the stranger was painting himself in too gentle a tone.

John is never unpleasant long. Besides he said he liked it—this stopping. It was like a book of adventure. Now one of the most delightful things about books of adventure is the unexpectedness of the happenings beyond, perhaps, an uneasy feeling in the air, a murkiness of the atmosphere, or the sudden silence of the birds. Looking back upon it, I don't remember a bird singing within a mile of Capua, and it was in Capua where we spent the night. This was as great a surprise to us as to any one, and, therefore, cannot be classed as anything less than an adventure of the first water, which was, of course, very delightful—but we would rather have gone on.

It was our daring motor that set its heart on staying over. As soon as the old city walls were in sight,

it began to hop along, then hold back, emitting sharp retorts to anything we said, and, finally, when we refused to come to any positive agreement about stopping, settled down and pretended to go to sleep.

We sat there in the middle of the road for some time calling it names, and when a bandit with a gun and an umbrella came along, we immediately offered him the car if he would but give us our lives. You see, we had to make some excuse for our liberality or he would become suspicious, but to our surprise he said he would spare us gladly if he could be excused from taking the auto, that he had never had any luck on the highway with his own motor. He considered them too noisy for successful hold-ups, and though we assured him this one was unusually quiet, he said he would rather be "let out," as his old lady didn't like to have them smelling up the cave. We may have misinterpreted him slightly, knowing so little of his tongue, but our offer was in good, plain English, so that he must have grasped the state of affairs. Anyway, he was a very kindly bandit, and pushed the car into a nearby farmyard, greatly to the excitement of a pretty girl, who emerged from the best parlour, where the cows were kept, and invited me into the more simple living-room.

The bandit was very keen about our going into Capua after *speranza*, which turned out to be "hope" when I looked it up in the red dictionary, and, as John said, well worth a cab ride. We se-

cured one, practically "hailed a passing hansom," and the bandit and I drove into moated, ancient Capua on our errand of hope, or perhaps I should say for hope. It was sitting in front of the *caffè*, very fat and comfortable, and on the way back in the cab, pointed out its engine foundry, that of "B. Speranza," which explained everything, and a most useful man to have in such a crisis.

I left him puttering around, and went into the farmhouse with the girl, of course not into the best room with the cows—I know my place—but as close to the chimney hearth as I could get. The girl shook a dog off a chair and pushed the cat out of the embers. There was no apology for the exceeding poorness of the room—a bit of good breeding which is inherent in every peasant—but no queen could have been more gently handled. My hat was removed and admired, my coat shaken out and adored. With careful hands I was fingered from neck chain and rings to the ruffle of my petticoat, a petticoat of silk! She fell on her knees, giving little cries of rapture, and rustled the silk between her fingers. How every woman loves that sound? She was greatly concerned that I did not wear it over my cloth skirt, and decided it must be on account of the mud.

There was no envy in her admiration. The *brillanti* rings were quite beyond her, and the petticoat of *seta* a thing for fairies in broken-down motor cars. One of the thoughts that generally come to

me an hour too late sent me out to seek the aid of the bandit, and after some unfastening of straps and shifting of luggage, my plaid silk skirt was produced, slightly cracked at the seams, and with Paris in view very little to regret. It was the bandit who was obliged to explain in the end that I meant it for her, to keep forever and ever, or until the ruffles split at any rate. Twice she fondled it, and twice handed it back, thanking me for the look, and twice I put it on her and pushed her away with it. It wasn't sensible, of course. A peasant has no right with a petticoat of silk, but oh, the ecstacy in her eyes!

After that thrilling incident, it was of small importance to us that Signor Speranza had decided there were still slight deposits of the dangerous petroleum in the tank, and, working into the carbureter, now and then caused improper combustion. But John was much relieved and jumped at the chance offered him of emptying the gasoline at present in the car, and buying more from the hopeful gentleman.

The Means cranked very successfully after this edict had gone forth, the speck of retarding kerosene having evidently run through, and on the strength of a new and expensive meal, rolled successfully under the fine arch of the old town into Mr. Hope's establishment. I followed in my hired chariot, but before entering the town, my progress was arrested by the wild cries of the farm girl, who

was discovered running madly after me up the middle of the road. It was only a moment's delay, however; she would know the cost of her plaid petticoat of silk.

Speranza, having a brother in the restaurant business, advised us strongly to stay over for the night, and we found rooms at the Albergo di Posti. I had some difficulty seeing that John was made as comfortable as myself, the idea prevailing that he was the chauffeur, and I a lady travelling with my car. John didn't care for this at all, but I enjoyed it a good deal. Now he makes a dash for the hotel register, and declares himself in writing, frustrating all attempts to put him on the servants' floor. If we were the first Anglo-Saxons to patronise the signora's house, she gave no sign of it, and having heard remotely of the quantities of water used by such aquatic animals, littered the floor with pots and pans and jars of the commodity. Indeed, we had to wash much oftener than we should have done to sustain our reputation.

The dinner with Signor Hope's brother was very good. There were fresh flowers on the table, and every pleasant effort made to run up a large account. The signor himself joined us, and was so interested in some photographs we happened to be carrying of New England scenes, that John presented him with one. "The picture of our little country home," I heard him say, at the same time stepping cautiously on my toes. I leaned over,

looked and gasped, for it was the church with the steeple that stands on the green in New Haven! John added modestly that there were many country places with much higher towers, but Mr. Speranza thought it very fine, indeed, showing it to the patrons of the *caffè* while his brother hurried out to add three francs to the dinner bill.

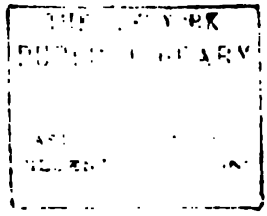
The army officers did not notice our house, for which we were very glad, as they were keen-looking young men. Indeed, they did not notice me, which was unusual. As a rule, when a stranger is about, they walk around unnecessarily, twirl their moustaches, and are elaborately apologetic if they brush against the signora with their long grey capes, but this night they sat at their table, which is always reserved for them in the best *caffè* of each town, drinking silently and heavily.

It was Speranza who told us of their trouble, of a duel that morning between brother officers. "The Tragedy at Capua," the Roman papers now refer to it, and as foolish a killing as that of poor Francesco. There was a woman, a wife of three months, there was an officer inferior to the rank of her husband. He was no more guilty than the making of eyes, and she less so, for she resented it, and yet, oh, dear! are not we women of one race? She "p'tended," just like the children, she "p'tended" it was a serious matter, that she might tease her husband into a more active devotion. We could do that in America, and there the brutes would laugh, but think of



CAPRI
"Along the MOLTA BELLA *road"*





jesting with these firebrands! The papers do not say what her denials nor her pleadings must have been before he finally shook her off at midnight, nor how she must have waited till the dawn, and past it, when he was brought home with a bullet in his body and a deadly sword thrust in his throat. First the pistols were used, the signor told us, then, failing his purpose, the poor, maddened creature demanded swords, and at the first idle lunge of the young officer, who was bewildered by the falseness of the charge, and had no intent to kill, "the husband of the signora fell to the earth."

The signor's voice sunk to a hoarse whisper, and his hands, fingers outspread and palms down, fell heavily to his knees. His fat, comfortable face was at that moment a tragic mask. He was Italy itself, a people who laugh and cry, and eat and fight. "And so," he continued, bringing his shoulders up to his ears, "as the woman weeps, the men drink, which is the way of the world."

"The trouble with some women is," I said to John when we reached our amphibious apartment in the Albergo di Posti, "they never know when they are well off," and John laughed and kissed me, and swam away to his bed. I think I turned over twice, and I know I heard a great noise in the distance like the slam of a mighty door. Then Vesuvius and Peggy Ward slept through the night.

If John had decided to give up the night in Terracina and run through to Rome without further de-

lay, our motor car had different plans. We were the whole blessed day teasing it as far as that place. We got very well acquainted with the machine, and now and then could grasp a few motor words between its pantings and gurglings. Twice I am sure it said, "What's your hurry?" And once John caught it muttering something about "Treat me right, and I'll treat you right."

"Tell us what you want," said John persuasively. "Do you want more gasoline?" No answer. "Don't you like that nice new oil in the cylinders?" Not a sound. John himself was sure it was a leaky valve. It seems they should be ground once every thousand miles, and our car had done many miles in America before running it about here. But we could get no satisfaction from the auto itself. It was as mute as an oyster on the subject, though once, while throwing out some very black smoke, I thought it wheezed tauntingly "Why don't you find out?"

Now that was John's weak spot. He did *not* know how to take out a valve, nor could he trust to the mechanics along the way on whom he had counted. The one in Formia swore he was an expert, and declared the difficulty was centred in the umbrella basket, whereupon John wrenched the tools from him and drove on, for (I am not quite sure why, though it's been explained to me carefully) valves are very delicate affairs, and must not be rudely handled. So there was nothing to do but let

our erring auto have a rest every now and then, when it would start up and go on very beautifully.

We learned some of its little ways. If I said "goats ahead," it was sure to stop, and I had to watch myself carefully; and we often noticed when it had rested a bit, it would go much better afterwards if John had crawled underneath and gazed into the apparatus for awhile. The achievement of forcing a tall, finely built man to lie on his back like an inverted idol worshipper seemed a direct appeal to its vanity. John didn't care. He said he'd lie in the apron all the way, with his eyes glued to the driving shaft, if we could only get to Rome.

John and I could still laugh wonderfully. Whenever we were in motion we would become deliriously happy, immediately forget past difficulties and the possibility of future ones, and just love everybody. John says this is called Automobile Elation. All motorists have the sensation. It is hurled into them along with the swift current of air. It's a funny thing—keeps me snappy in the daytime and heavy with sleep at night. Some moments I quite forgot that this trip was not for pleasure, and I am seeing Italy as I never saw it before.

One is so much nearer to the country and the people travelling by the roads. A train typifies only the means to an end. We look out of the car windows, and are aliens to those we pass by. In a motor, while we are great people to the peasants, we are among them. The men and women of the

fields run pell-mell to the hedge at the sound of our horn and wave a greeting. The little boys of the village meet us at one gate and patter after us as we pass through the other. Old women nod from their looms, and old men, rings in their ears and hats in hand, ask, with the simplicity of their race, the price of such *belli automobili.* I wonder how we can give them enough to admire in our poor selves and equipment as a fair exchange for what they give us!

The arts never flourish in the provinces between Naples and Rome. We are spared churches and faded pictures and any analytical study of the architecture, but always, if one's mind must be continually improved, are the ruins of the Romans.

Terracina offers a whole temple to Venus, such a rugged, ugly one for a soft, beautiful lady, too! Poor Miss Venus, or was it Mrs., never had the proper surroundings. She should have lived in the days of La Pompadour in an atmosphere of silken draperies and gilt furniture. She would have revelled in a gay coach with white horses, and I am not sure but that a limousine motor car, all pale grey and silver, with electric lights inside, would have appealed to her sensibilities. Doves, I believe, were offered her on the rock-hewn altar at Terracina—always doves. I can imagine her yawning and saying, "What! pigeon pie again for dinner? Oh, for a beau with a pint of *café parfait*, or even a 'stew in a box.'" But such flippancies were not for her—nor for us—in Terracina.

The new town lies at the water's edge, a poor place, despised even by the children who lie in the street and invite annihilation. John wasn't very keen about the Inn at Terracina by this time, but it was sunset, and we stopped. The adventuresome Means pranced off to bed in the stable below the Albergo Reale, the landlord assuring us of its perfect safety since his wife slept there, while we occupied London, two flights up. All the rooms were designated by the names of the great cities that were so remote from Terracina. We had the choice of Vienna, Paris, and the British capital, but chose the last, as it happily combined a wonderful view of the sea, some inlaid furniture worthy of a palace, and the two worst beds in the world.

Before midnight most of the cities were occupied, a German walking party that arrived by train invading them without a word of protest from the various governments. I always welcome a German walking party, and attend them closely in the hope of seeing them walk at some time or other during their trip. As yet I have found them travelling to their destination, leaving it, or driving around in cabs in the search of a good place to begin, but never employing their walking sticks more actively than in the attempt to keep off beggars.

The tramp who presented himself to us as we drank our coffee in the square was a much honester specimen of a man who walks. He was an accomplished hobo, and told us in Italian, French and

English that he had arrived on his feet and was much tired. He looked it, and deserved our franc. We were feeling kindly towards the homeless that evening, and upon being questioned as to his reasons for walking about Europe, admitted that he had none, which was another bond of sympathy. It was the curse of the wandering foot with him as it was the curse of the wandering motor with us, and I do not doubt but that the wildness of the blood which sent him straying was the same vagabond element that caused our tolerant attitude towards adventuresome autos.

We were up early next morning, bent upon reaching Rome by sunset no matter what the delay, and it did not surprise us to find that the walking party was not yet out. There had been some intention the night before of an early rise, for their calls had been given in resolute tones, but their indifference to walking had increased with the coming up of the sun. To be sure, Nice was astir, Berlin had ordered its shoes, and St. Petersburg, evidently very young, was weeping dismally for *Mutter;* but particularly disgraceful was the performance of Vienna, who would *not* get up and eat its egg. All this from the proprietor, who was boots, cook, chambermaid and waitress, and whose agitation over Vienna and the cooling egg was pitiful in the extreme.

"If it was nothing to me, signora, Vienna could sleep till doomsday, but what will he say when he tries the egg; what else but that it is cold, signora; and what does that mean, what does that mean, signora;

another egg, that is the answer, signora. Another egg, and no more money. Ah, these *Tedesci!*" And the proprietor flapped his dirty serving napkin towards the ever unpopular Germans.

The lady of the stable did not behave well over the franc given her for the housing of our Means, but whatever malediction she may have cast upon us failed in its effect for twenty-five miles—twenty-five miles of the way of Appius Claudius. It is called by the Italians the *Fettuccia*, the name of the longest spaghetti because it is a straight road without turnings until the mountain town of Velletri.

The country was green and beautiful, and I would never have imagined it to be the deadly Maremma which breeds a devastating fever. I had always fancied the Maremma to be an arid plain, with gaunt, wan people crawling around begging for bread. There were few people to crawl, and they leave during the summer, in the winter living in the straw huts that have not improved in style for one thousand years or more. It is said that exact replicas of these huts were found carved in stone among the ruins of the forum. Just imagine an American people existing one thousand years without building additions to their family mansion. Why, we can't resist improving the pigsty.

Perhaps when one lives in the Maremma one doesn't care. We spent eight hours there, quite unexpectedly, of course, and I wouldn't have added a bay window to my temporary domicile had they offered me

the timber. We stopped very nicely in front of a farmhouse, and John stalked around, swearing softly.

"It's not the engine, Peggy," he said, "although not doing good work, and it's not the batteries. There is plenty of oil, so what the dickens——," and then he made a dash for the gasoline tank as though struck by a mighty thought, thrust down the measuring rod, and brought it up—quite dry.

"By the great Lord Harry, they've robbed us!" And so they had, in Terracina.

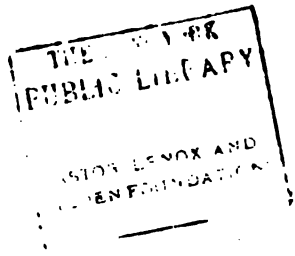
I did not look dear John straight in the eye, for well he knew that the graveness of the offence of the thief was little to the offence of the driver. The man who starts his day with his tank unexamined is the man who will learn, but through the bitter knocks of experience.

John said that himself later, so I can repeat it. At the time I collapsed on the roadside speechless, and Filomena and Vittoria came out immediately to see me. They asked the price of my rings, and Filomena thought her wedding-ring was better than mine, it being quite fanciful. Vittoria had no wedding-ring as yet, but was pretty enough to have a dozen if she wished, so she bore us no ill will. We were very good friends in a short time, and I thought how many hours we waste at home, eyeing one another suspiciously and finding out about ancestors before we even leave cards.

They gave us luncheon in the "other" room. There were two, with bedrooms above. It was a very



CAPUA
"The fine arch of the old town"


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good farmhouse, the windows screened and the door left wide open. We had two eggs apiece, cooked in little casseroles, which were laid on the embers that glowed richly all day in the huge fireplace; then there was fish in oil, and cold bacon, with all the yellow wine of the province that we could drink. They changed the plates, too, with every course. They were tin, and there was some hurrying to get them washed in time, but still it was evident we were nearing Rome by the fashions.

John drove off to Cisterna, six miles away, for gasoline, with the farmer's son behind the farmer's mule, while the girls and I washed the car under the impression that it would be in Rome before nightfall. We chatted a good deal, at least they did, and if I found them difficult to understand, Vittoria raised her voice, and shrieked the thought at me, which, of course, made the translation easier.

I talked very gently with The Means, and begged it, when the gasoline arrived, to go direct to Rome in spite of its leaky valve, and not yearn for any more marauding, but there was no response beyond a twinkling of the star in its forehead, which is equivalent to an Argus-eyed wink, and caused me some uneasiness. Being a motor car, The Means is slightly occult, and could read the future, but I little knew how near we were to the real adventure of our trip. I didn't feel that I was "getting warm," as the children say, when a languid young man jogged along in a pony cart, and all the loungers rose to their

feet, hats in hand, and bowed low, even pretty Vittoria, who looked at me reproachfully as I continued my attack on the brass work.

If there had been a murkiness in the atmosphere, I might have suspected something, but it was very pleasant, and the bored young man went out of my life just as John came in, on foot, poor dear, for the farmer's boy had driven on to bend the knee before a *duca* person, and under tired John's arm was six quarts of gasoline. It was all Cisterna had to offer, and when I poured that into an open vessel for examination, a streak of yellow oil ran through the liquid. It was impure! Seventeen miles ahead lay Velletri, but it was now sunset, and the mule was tired as well as slow. Hostelries there were none. The railroad was hours away. I slipped my hand into John's mournfully, as we sat on a big stone in the courtyard. John mournfully squeezed it, and the telephone bell rang.

It was the beginning of The Adventure.

Chapter VI

I HAD been quite impressed with the telephone earlier in the day; such an installation is not found in every farmhouse. But I had taken no personal interest in it. John declares now that he had felt a peculiar electric thrill every time he looked that way. John's memory of his subtle emotions after a thing is all over would shame a Hindoo, and it was annoying in the face of such dishonesty that the telephone should single him out as a recipient of its confidences. But it did, and all that I could gather while he was answering the call, was that the unusual was happening. The farm people were gesticulating madly, and the farmer thrust his armchair under my weak knees with an abrupt homage which nearly knocked me over.

John came down a minute after, flicking his cuffs airily, and I knew immediately that he was going to be aggravating about the message. I had to begin. I had sworn to myself that I wouldn't, but the silence was ponderous.

"Folks all well at home?" I asked.

"Don't know about that," John replied, "but you'll be pleased to hear that things are running smoothly at the castle." I waited. "Uncommonly civil in the Prince," he continued, after a pause.

"The Prince!" I breathed.

"Yes, my friend, the Prince."

I yawned. "Which one of them?"

It never fazed him. "We ran across his family name in the guide last night. It's rather lengthy. So we, that is, *we* who know him well, and love him, we fellows, let it go as Pazassas—the Prince of Pazassas."

Isn't John awful? But I remained perfectly calm.

"Rome very excited over our delay?" I hazarded finally.

"Streets all torn up, he tells me. But he's not in Rome—he's six miles away, in the village."

"Oh—of course you offered him a ride?" looking at our inactive vehicle.

"Yes. But I think he's in something of a rush. Says he'll walk to town. He has three motors himself, you know."

"Wants to borrow gasoline, I suppose?" This was a fine thrust, and I expected results.

"No," said John quietly, stopping his play acting. "Wants to loan some."

"Really, John?" I think my voice quavered a little. One wishes so to believe in fairy tales when one has no place to lay one's head. John melted.

"Yes, his younger brother came along to-day, and saw you here. The Prince made inquiries, learned of our predicament, and is sending his mechanic with gasoline and some tools to fix the valve."

I stood right up and began to fluff my hair.

"John Ward, do you mean to say he's coming here, a real mechanic of a real prince?"

"Sure he is," asserted John, so vulgarly.

"Will he have buttons on his coat with a coronet and a motto?"

"I don't know—we'll look, and if he hasn't, of course we shan't take the gasoline."

"John, don't be foolish. Now think, please, and tell me just what is the Prince's voice like."

"Like a Prince's," he replied, after a minute's thought, "and a d——d good fellow's," he added reflectively. Then the bell rang again, and John flew up the steps. "That's for me, no doubt. I am so popular in the Maremma. Come on, Peggy, you dare stand by me."

I followed him into the room and listened hungrily, only to hear John say "ung huh" over the 'phone about a dozen times, which was not elegant, nor did it enlighten, and once that "the *Duchessa* is very kind," just as easily as though he was taking an "ad" for Sunflower Soap.

It was a funny scene. The farm people had tiptoed into the room with their hats in their hands, and if I moved they "*sshd*" me with one voice. I said he was my husband, if their prince, and I could move if I wanted to—but I said it in English. The head of the house was very communicative, and whispered up the fireplace so that his voice would not offend, while I crouched down and gathered what I could of

the benevolence of the Duke and Duchess, the latter English, of the five hundred square miles of farm land which they owned, and of the eldest son, the Prince, who was staying in the village now with his "lady mother," of his so wonderful intelligence, speaking all languages, some quite dead.

John hung up the 'phone. "Take those eggs out of the casserole" (we were about to eat again), "the Duchess has asked us to dine."

"Let those eggs cook," I countermanded. "Tin plates and shabby clothes for us this night."

We compromised on eating the eggs, and asking permission to pay our respects and gasoline bill when we passed the farmhouse, as the Prince called it. I knew all along that it must really be a palace—the old castle was in a neighbouring hillside town—that I had gathered from Baedeker before coming into close telephonic relations with the family, the farmer had aspirated something up the chimney about a place by the sea, and I had never passed their *palazzo* in Rome without entertaining the uncomfortable sensation that the grim goldlaced porter at the gates was mad to push me off the premises with his wand. I just wish that porter could have heard John unghuhing over the 'phone to his own Prince, or seen the two of us sitting in armchairs while the mechanician fixed our leaky valve. I sat very ill at first, and was not happy till I had prowled round the liveried servant as he worked, eyeing his buttons closely in the gloom, and that stupid John didn't know at all what

I could mean when I suddenly announced "He has them!"

And so he had, and there were more at the farmhouse, but the Prince had put on a sweater that he might induce us to dine as we were, our faces shining with Filomena's Soap, but otherwise quite terrible to look upon. We never breathed a word about the eggs, but backed The Means into the courtyard, praying that we wouldn't bump into anything, and we stayed.

"It's all very well," whispered John to me, as we were being led through endless corridors, "but I haven't the ghost of an idea what to call 'em."

It seemed a very serious matter until we met the Duchess, and then I knew she would graciously forgive me if I addressed her only as "Say." She was a perfect dear, in a lilac gown, and lots of old lace, with a long train, which John rode on for some distance, enjoying the locomotion, but perplexed as to his means of transit, her Grace far too polite to shake off a guest. However, we both came out even with the knives and forks at dinner, which so elated us that we actually stayed over night, when urged. That was very daring—staying all night. One could do so many wrong things. Our eyes were quite round with excitement when we were finally left in our great sleeping rooms. John said he accepted because he was tired, and liked the family, but I thought how well it would read in court if I could only induce John to be brutal. Something like this:

"Ducal Palace. Heaven help me, how will this

end? I was obliged to fly this morning to the Prince of Pazassas for protection from the violence of my husband. He threw an egg cup at me, which I fortunately caught, or he would have ruined the carpet —the Duchess did up my wounds."

But just as I was getting out my green diary preparing for my first triumphant entry, John swooped down upon me and carried it off. I have never yet opened its covers—John so zealously guards it. One not knowing his vagaries, would think it was the book he wanted. I know it is the wife—I mean, I hope it is the wife, and as I hope, something comes chugging into the back of my brain—something on rubber tires, and propelled by a big, firm power, a feminine power altogether admirable—oh, altogether admirable! And yet, when taken altogether, not altogether to my taste.

I didn't say a word to the Duchess about my ideas on a broader view of life, nor did I dwell upon the Minerva Club. Somehow the Minerva Club seemed rather small in its intents and purposes as we sat in that big, frescoed drawing-room, full of English furniture, and talked of the duties of the wives of dukes and advertising men.

She came in the next morning after we had breakfasted, wearing a short skirt, and looking quite young enough to be the Princess. She had been seeing some peasants who had called on various missions. One mother had brought her albino baby for Her Grace to turn into normal colouring. "The

Duchessa is so kind—she can do this for me," the woman had urged, and the Duchess sighed.

"They are ignorant people, and will not learn," she said. "The country does not lend itself to their improvement. We cannot keep them here in the summer time, for the fever comes. Yes, it is often deadly. All of us have had it, and it really never leaves the blood, but returns continually in one way or another. As you see, our windows are closely screened, for the mosquito carries the disease, and we screen the houses of our people also, but they cut holes in the windows that they may look up and down the road. Then they die, and it is very sad."

"The only chance for the Maremma," said the Prince, who had been typewriting at an American machine near by, "is the draining of the swamps. When the government sees to that, this fertile land will be useful as well as beautiful." And he smiled, as only a Pazassas Prince can smile.

The mechanic and the night in the Duke's house did The Means a great deal of good, and the Prince, admiring the simplicity of the construction, caused it to glide out of the courtyard with as graceful a bow to the Duchess, who had come to speed us, as any limousine French car run by royalty could possibly have made. Its satisfaction increased as we climbed the hill of Velletri, surmounted by a tower, and passed a canopied motor occupied by officers, whose front wheel was dangerously wiggling on its way down. The men seemed to be enjoying their

proximity to an early trouble, refusing our assistance, and waving into the distance with loud laughter.

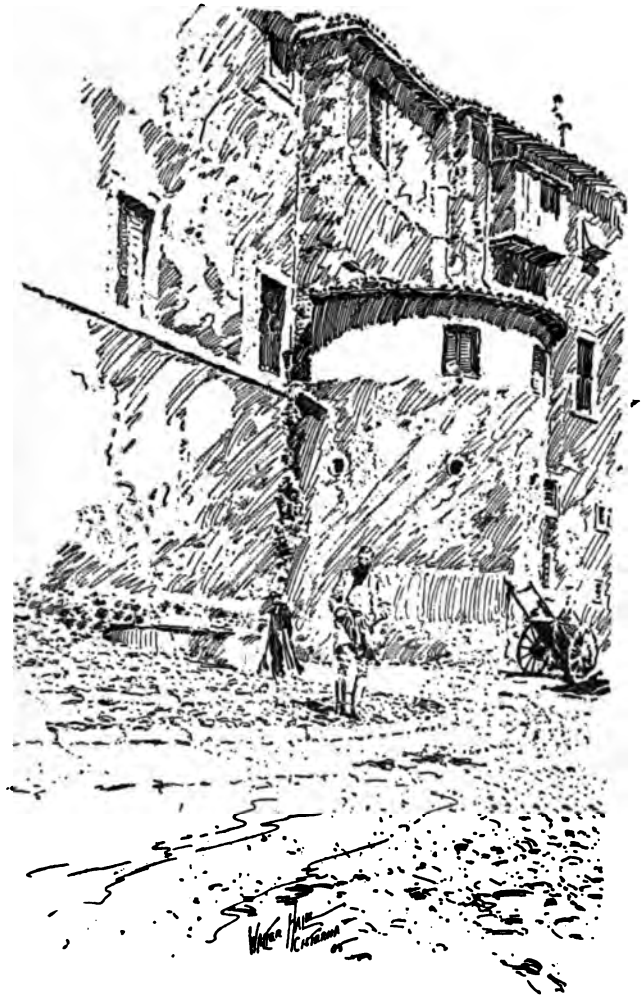
It is probably great fun to be venturesome, but no one cares about it along the road except the venturers. A hundred yards beyond the gallant officers, we met another auto coasting down a steep grade, while a few feet farther on, a ditched donkey cart and a raving driver bore testimony to the reckless peregrinations of our brother motorists. He shook his fist at us as we passed him—an enemy from that time forth to all who drove a car.

I was endeavouring to argue the point with him, raising my voice as the distance widened, and did not see a third motor approaching on our side of the road, with a strong inclination to stay there. John jammed down the brakes, and the four lamps of the two opposing forces stared unblinkingly into each other's brassy countenance. The drivers were equally metallic of expression. Neither budged.

"Signor," began John, haltingly, "turnate *a* youra *destra.*" John has a wonderful way of taking an English word and putting an Italian final to it. His opponent didn't seem to mind. He recognised the word for "right," and rose to it.

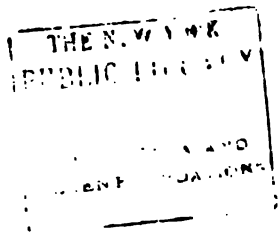
"*Io sono destra,*" he asserted. Freely translated, this man was saying that he was on the right side. It angered John, which is always bad for his Italian, though the flow of words continued.

"*Perche avete la* nerva for tellare me *questa* nonsensica," he demanded imperiously. I was glad John



CISTERNA

"The farmhouse, as the Prince called it"


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got " why," " have you," and " this " correctly, but I feared the Italian would not grasp the dressed-up condition of the nerve, to tell, and nonsense, and I listened attentively. At first he seemed quite depressed, remaining silent for a minute, and then to my surprise and delight, he laboriously yet wrathfully produced, " Getate out, *e necessario quando vicina Roma* that *tutti* motori turnare *a la a la*—" Then in a burst of agony to himself he murmured, " Now what in time is the name for left? "

" *Sinistra*," I called, lifting up my veil, and beaming on a nice, pig-headed American. We all screamed loud, as our nation does when perfectly happy, and while John rummaged for his flask, the American explained that Rome followed the English law of the road, and so did many other of the Italian cities, the rule taking effect several miles from each place, and recognised only by some psychological emotion which should stir within the breast of the true roadster, " either that or by a collision," added the American, wiping off his mouth and winking at me in a friendly United States fashion.

" Still, you and I with our command of Italian need fear nothing," replied John, when the last drop was drained.

" Or, lacking that, on occasions, with the inventive genius of your race, and a knowledge of the finals," I concluded, and we drove on to the left.

Through beautiful Albano and Frascati we slipped, all the little boys crying " *piano, piano*," surprised

at the quiet of the car, down into the long slope along the straight line of the Appian Way that leads to Rome. As always, the power of the Church is thrust upon us in the dome of St. Peter's, which is the first to greet the eyes of the stranger upon arrival, and the last picture as he turns back on leaving the city. When we are within the walls, the shops, the cafés, the theatres seem to fill a large place in the life of the capital, but St. Peter's bides its time, content to loom above these worldly offerings, when all the rest of Rome is but a plain in the distance.

I thrilled and thrilled, clear up to the gate of San Giovanni, and was delighted to find myself doing so. The approach to Rome by railway is not conducive to emotions, but I am large-hearted enough to hope that every pilgrim will be able to enter at least once in his life by the Appian Way—even if he must get a divorce to do it.

It was noon when we drew up at our familiar Italian hotel in the Piazza Poli, with our engine in perfect shape, and a great feeling of kindliness towards Italy at large choking up our throats.

"Peggy," said John, "I think our troubles are about over. Thanks to Christianity by the wayside, and the roads of the Roman Emperors, we will make Paris."

John should have said his troubles, not ours. I thought the difficulty with the diary would be bad enough, but now that I have undertaken to learn the machine, I find getting a divorce without definite

cause is what John would call "a pipe." Mrs. Baring is at our hotel. John recommended it, and I wish he hadn't, for as soon as she learned I was going into a thorough study of the engine, she loaned me a book "as an assistance," and from that time on she and John would go into the *salon* and discuss grades, or, very politely, pictures, if Douglas Warwick called, while I had to sit in my room with "the assistance" in my lap in case they came in suddenly.

It begins very sensibly with a chapter on "How a Motor Carriage Turns"—at least it sounds as though it would be sensible, and some of the pictures are very funny, but it takes too much for granted. "As is well known," it says (when it is not even whispered about) "each running wheel of a horse carriage is made with a pierced hub and a hollow axle box," so after I committed all about horse carriages, I learned that "it is not practicable to confine the steering and tractive functions so as to imitate the actions of a horse," which renders my earlier study useless, although any fool could have told the book that no one would want a motor carriage which galloped, or was a single-foot, or any of those fancy gaits. In that entire chapter there is not a single ray of light thrown on the turning of a motor, a subject that might easily be disposed of by saying to the right and to the left.

I thought "Steering a Motor Carriage" would be a more practical chapter. John lets me lean over to do it now and then, and if there is any way of

learning how to keep the car straight, I am willing to give an evening to it, but no, every paragraph begins with "As may be readily understood," or "The reader will see at a glance," and then swings off into the depths of words never fathomed by the plumb of an ordinary mind. The only crumb of comfort I could get was that "The balance of leverage is in the driver's favour," and it's good to know something will be on my side, whatever leverage may be, but when the author goes on to say that "this same fact also involves that the steering handle cannot be wobbled or vibrated," he proves himself a liar; there isn't a single part of our car which doesn't wobble when I'm driving, and I've got John to back me up.

Chapter V. begins with "It would require very little reflection to understand," just as if he knew how long I reflected over my studies! And when I read in the next paragraph that "numerous devices were still being invented so as to drive on all four wheels at once," I skipped twenty pages in horror. I never thought there was going to be any difficulty about keeping on our four wheels. Now there is another thing to bother me, and I shall look forward to crossing the Apennines with the front wheels in the air while climbing, and the hind wheels sticking up and admiring the scenery on our way down.

John came in (he had gone out with Mrs. Baring for "coffee") just as I was worrying over the following equation, prefaced by "it is not necessary to explain that: give *A* for the ball bearings, and *B* for the rear

axle; then $A + B - C$ (which will stand for the carriage cushions) and divided by the searchlight G would equal $X\ X$; that is to say, the amount of cotton waste remaining in the tool-chest." Those may not have been the exact parts of the car, but I am sure about the letters, and I cried, partly because it *was* necessary to explain and more partly because John had gone out for "coffee" with Mrs. Baring, but next day John returned the book, and I've had some quiet lessons, after we had gone beyond the gates.

Our car attracts a great deal of attention, and a Count of something whom John met at the garage says that everyone is talking in Rome of the young couple who are crossing Europe without a mechanic. If they knew that John had had but two weeks' experience before coming over they would be still more astonished, but John attributes his ability to steer so successfully to his many years on a bicycle, and, unlike him, while fine drivers, few of the Europeans have made any attempt to know their engines, for chauffeurs are not luxuries over here, and, indeed, a man who can own one of these expensive European cars need not stop at the price of a mechanician.

Of course we do not spend all of our time riding around Rome in the frivolous pursuit of pleasure, but we are better acquainted with the outside of churches than the inside, and at any time we prefer a live Italian to a dead saint. We are continually running across the ship's passengers, and there are moments when I feel I'm still on the boat and will

shortly promenade off the stern if I don't turn back. Most of them ask if we have seen the things they've seen, and if we haven't, we missed the treat of our lives. John exasperated the minister to the verge of frenzy by admitting that we overslept on the morning the Pope held early Mass, and when we told the nervous man that we had been in Rome two years ago, yet went to a picnic the day the old Pope died, he wrung his hands with envy, he himself having waited around for a week, " and then he up and passed away before I reached Perugia."

The most pathetic figure of all the tired throng was Robert Robbins of the yachting cap. We found him in the hour of his arrival in the Corso, sitting on the sidewalk of the Café Aragno in a new cap, also nautical of design, and giving an imitation to the perplexed waiter of a piece of ice in a Scotch highball. John helped him out, and in a burst of homesickness he unbosomed himself.

" You see, it's this way. The mater's written down a lot of stunts that I ought to do. That striped cathedral in Siena, and a big statue of David or Goliath in Florence that this Irish-Italian Michael what-you-may-call-it did; also the town that's got the towers, and is great because it's so hard to pronounce and to get to—here it is—San Gimignano—mother's a crack speller. Then there's San Marino, though why anybody who lives in the biggest republic in the world should want to go trapesing around Italy to see the smallest is a mystery to me. It just takes up

one's time, and all the while about the nicest girl I know is in Venice with her mother, rather expecting me to come along."

"Won't she wait?" asked John.

"Not half as likely to as the cathedral at Siena. You never can tell about girls. They're not as stable as a church, you know. I'll bet when I'm old and shaky, and take a keener interest in edifices than I do now, I can hunt up that cathedral, and it won't have lost a stripe, but where'll that girl be?"

"Judging by your evident intentions, old and shaky and in Siena too," chuckled John.

"And there's more than that to worry me," the youth went on, unheeding the interruption. "There's her father, or rather, there will be her father. He's coming over in a month, and he doesn't like me."

"He's a mean man," I put in, trying to say the right thing.

"Thank you, Mrs. Ward; you're awfully kind to a poor devil." (He loved that word "devil.") "But I must be fair; it isn't really *I* he doesn't like."

"You said it was!" This from John sternly.

"I know I did, and I say it again," retorted the boy excitedly. "You see, he thinks it's I, but it isn't; it's really my cousin."

"Then why don't you tell him he likes you," said I. "He'll be glad to know it."

"I have—that is, I've written him. You see, we've never met yet, but he sent back word *he* ought to know whom he likes."

"That's feasible," murmured John.

I was a little bewildered. "Could you explain?" I asked.

"Simple enough," returned Robert Robbins, amazed at our stupidity. "I've got a cousin named Robert Robbins, and he's no good. He went down to Mexico and married a girl there in one of the little villages near the mines where he was engineer. Then he said he hadn't married her and ran away. Little Miss Venice's old dad came down to attend to his interests just after that, heard the talk, and has a faculty for remembering names."

"Can't you square yourself?" asked John.

"Did my best—wrote him I'd never been married; but he says that's just what the Mexican Robbins declared. You see, he's a man of one idea, and that one idea is me."

"Can't think of any way out of it but to change your name," advised John. "What's your plan of action?"

"Oh, I'm not bothering with plans. It'll clear itself up in time," said the boy with the exquisite confidence of youth, "but just at present she's in Venice, and here am I, separated from her by a gulf of antiques. Now, take Rome, for instance. Is there anything to see in Rome?" Mindful of "about the nicest girl he knew" in Venice, we assured him it was a desert, and after a quite unnecessary wrangle with the waiter over change, he left us to buy his ticket, vowing that he would write an article and



VELLETRI

"Surmounted by a tower"

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" show up Italy " (but we understand that the Italian Government is making overtures to purchase his silence).

We admit our mistake in not seeing the new Pope; even Giuseppe and Carlo, who uphold us in all we do, shake their heads at us over this. Giuseppe and Carlo are the servants in the *salle à manger* of our hotel of the Piazzi Poli, and they have been there ever since we could remember. That is seven years ago. No one nearing thirty or over it should remember farther back than seven years. Why they remain I do not know, for the hotel is not patronised by foreigners, and the tips are small accordingly, but with the *concierge*, who speaks Russian and no English, and will not mend his ways, and the chambermaid, Adela, they stay on to welcome us, no matter what the changes in the office. Now there is a stolid Swiss at the desk, an ex-porter made rich at one of the big hotels, and we fear for the servants of our little *albergo*. Adela is getting old, and Giuseppe's bald spot has grown like a stripling in the last few years, but age has not made them crabbed; they are always with us to advise and admire.

For Italians they are ardent Catholics, and, like all the simple people, they love the new Pope, and do not mind if he is not a diplomat, and cannot speak the language of the country to the French Nuncio.

" The signora must see him when she can," said Giuseppe, standing by the table with his eyes on the door for the watchful Swiss, " for he will not be with

us always. When he came to Rome for the conference to elect a new Pope, all shabby, as we know, there was a little coin in his pocket, and a return ticket, signora, to his own Venice. The coin they say is gone. A prisoner has no need for that, but the ticket still remains, and some day, signora, it, too, will be gone; that and a Pope from the Vatican, while back in Venice the good priest Sarto will be found again. Believe me, signora, that is what the common people say, ignorant people, truly, but they know their *Papa Re.*" Then catching sight of the new proprietor, he seized my plate and bowed low. "I am pleased that the artichokes are tasteful, signora."

They have been very near to me these days, for John has not been so near. I had grown accustomed to his discussing tires whenever I verged on the intellectual—at least, I was the recipient of these rubber confidences. But now even this has been denied me, and from books to brakes he and Mrs. Baring find a perfect sympathy. I am generally with them; they insist upon that, but Douglas Warwick receives the same attention, and if he talks another picture to me I shall lie down on the floor and scream.

To-day we spent in the Borghese Gardens, with lunch on the grass, and the accuracy of odometers for conversation. I am very partial to picnics in Italy, but I can hardly say that I have set the fashion. The Italians dine at tables set on the cobblestones of the city streets, on the roofs and in deep

loggie. But they seem to care nothing at all about getting up several hours before sunrise, devilling eggs, making sandwiches, and with a second-best tablecloth starting for a day in the country. I never saw a man in Europe yet who could enthuse over carrying a case of pop on his shoulders (the men always furnish the liquid refreshment at picnics) or in walking three miles for a piece of ice upon arrival at the grounds. Men do not expand in Europe.

Once I induced a signora to accompany us. She wore white kid gloves, and she was very unhappy when she saw that the ants had found their way to the cakes. John told her this always happened at picnics, and was considered part of the fun. "It is called 'roughing' it," he said, "and at home we laugh a great deal and pretend that the warm beer is nicely iced in the spring, but it isn't."

"Dio mio! The bugs!" whines the signora, picking a piece of a grasshopper out of her hair.

"Yes," replied John, "one must get near to the ground to see nature at her best. I don't suppose you have ever before noticed so many little crawling things."

"Never!" gasped the signora.

"We leave our comfortable homes in the summertime, and live in canvas tents," continued my terrible husband, "so that we may have them with us at night as well as in the daytime, and they come in shoals. This pastime is called 'camping out.'"

The signora gave a glad cry of understanding.

"I have it," she exclaimed. "It is a penance! Yes?"

"You have guessed rightly," said John.

But still he came to my picnic in the lovely park of the Villa Borghese. We ate very nicely in the ancient, grassy amphitheatre, not afraid of the shades of the Romans nor yet of the Prince of Borghese, but neat with our crumbs in the fear of the Cardinal who had built the gardens in 1600, and would never have countenanced an egg sandwich on his domain, I am sure, unless he was the one to eat it.

There was other conversation besides odometers now and then, although it was fragmentary. We had our maps and Miss Grey her guidebook, she and Douglas Warwick trying hard to elevate us.

"I feel very sorry for the present Prince Borghese," I said; "he could have sold his Titian to an American for more than the Italian Government paid him for the whole collection."

"But the sum is enough for his luxuries, and surely he would prefer to keep his treasures in his own country," the Douglas Warwick replied.

"We need these things in America," ventured Miss Grey soulfully, "for the betterment of ourselves, for our firesides, for our hearths, for our—for our——"

"Grates," put in John. And Miss Grey was swamped into silence by the daring departure from her book.

"An American millionaire would keep his picture

to himself. Now the Titian here is for the public good," continued the artist.

"It doesn't do me any good," I said, hiding the sandwich papers under a stone; "I never can remember which woman is the Sacred and which the Profane Love. It bothers me more than The Lady or the Tiger ever did."

"I think those animals in the background are done beautifully," murmured Miss Grey, coming to the fore once more. "We had a rabbit once just like one of them."

"Well, if I had it," said John, "I'd paint in my automobile going over the hill on the high speed. Hanged if I wouldn't, and I'd give Warwick the commission."

"Don't, even in jest, don't speak so, Ward." The poor artist shuddered. "I'd rather lose my working hand."

"Let him paint it on the other side of the hill. Then it would not offend," put in Mrs. Baring kindly.

"I don't think that could be done," said Miss Grey, opening her book as though to seek information. What she found was Etruria, and it took us back to our trip. "It is a sombre country," she gave to us. "I feel that I shall be very sad going through it," she added, "there are so many tombs."

"Don't let it depress you," said John; "they are mostly used as pigsties now."

"We'll be out before we're in," said Mrs. Baring

briskly. "It lies between Rome and Narni, which is the open door of Umbria. There's a darling province for you, that never stops a minute making history. In ancient, mediæval and modern times there is always 'something doing' in Umbria."

"Must have a good advertising agent," commented John. "It's forever getting itself into print."

"'In mediæval times flourished the arts,'" read Miss Grey, then subsided.

"While grim old Etruria lay back upon her merits as the most distinctive race in ancient time," said Douglas Warwick, "she conquered Rome and Rome conquered her. She has no place in the present day or in the middle ages, but as builders she left her heavy mark."

"She left lots of jewellery in the Piazza di Spagna, —the lure of the strangers—and she's kept up her prices wonderfully on ram's-head bracelets." And I sighed. "I will feel that something has gone out of my life that will never return if I leave Rome without one of those ram's heads."

"About a hundred dollars will go out of my life and never return if you leave *with* one of them," grumbled John, and the thought drove him back to a discussion of inner tubes with Mrs. Baring.

Now I didn't mind the inner tubes, and of course I didn't mind Mrs. Baring so long as she confined herself to inner tubes. I generously turned my back upon her, but when John failed to pick up the chorus of his favourite song that I was singing, I knew that

they had left inner tubes, and I turned around again, and there was Mrs. Baring with her sleeve rolled up, showing her muscle to my husband, and—my—husband—was—pinching—it.

I am not a stickler for form, but one must draw the line somewhere, even at a picnic, so when Douglas Warwick said for the fourth time he'd like to drive through Etruria too, I just asked him to come along with us and ride on the trunk, and I tried to flash my teeth at him, but my lip quivered, so that I probably looked like a hyena. It made no difference—John neither heard nor noticed.

Then we went back. There was news from home, and when Adela rushed in at the sound of my loud wailing, I held a letter in my hand, and cried upon Adela's shoulder because the large dog San Bernardino of my small sister was *morte*, and Adela patted me upon the back and exclaimed over the soft heart of the signora.

But it was not for the large dog San Bernardino that I was weeping.

Chapter VII

We had intended the night before to leave Rome early in the morning, and might have done so but for our guest, who was to decorate the trunk. We had enriched the servants, put on our goggles, cranked the car, and attracted a goodly crowd before we discovered that the artist was missing. Then Paolo remembered that he had gone out to buy a cap, so there was nothing to do but wait, a performance which dampens the enthusiasm of departure, is lacking in all dramatic details and uses up gasoline. When he finally came he had to be reintroduced to us, for there was very little of our original guest remaining. The cap seemed to do it.

The artist said it was a very good cap, particularly as it could be turned into a number of different things, not rabbits or scrambled eggs or anything that savoured of the conjurer's art, but it could vary with the weather, having a number of flapping effects at the side, to be used in case of hail, snow, sun and wind. He had not just got the hang of the thing, he said, and upon consulting the printed directions, he found that he was starting out with the ear muffs on, but he was so pleased when John tied them into a Psyche knot in the back that we hadn't the heart to be cross. One of the remarkable traits of the genus painter is his simple confidence. It ap-

peals to one's vanity, at the same time that it irritates one to rebellion when we see him getting the best of it.

John had been mildly surprised at my inviting the artist for this trunk ride, and of course I didn't say a word to him about Mrs. Baring's muscle. Now that the morning had come, it didn't seem so serious a thing, and here I was cutting off my nose to spite my face, and delaying the gathering of material for my divorce in the most petty manner; for even a painter with his mind only on purple cows and thick blue atmosphere would observe from the trunk if John hit me or used cruel and abusive language.

In the midst of the muscular episode at the picnic it flashed across me that this was the true beginning of my diary, but on maturer reflection I decided to make no entry. We had agreed that the grounds were to be my husband's extreme cruelty, and it was fair to him that I should not enlarge my territory, divorcely speaking; besides, I would never let that Minerva Club know that John could possibly care for any other woman. No, not if he kissed her in my very teeth.

Still, I felt quite businesslike when we started; the green diary was sticking out, and everything was conducive to a good record before the day was over. I said that to John, meaningly, and he agreed with me, only he meant the run—that is, I think he meant the run.

"Yes, it will be a record to be proud of," enthused John.

"I mean a record for the green book." I dwelt upon the words.

"Well, so do I," he asserted. Sometimes I can't make John out.

However, I determined that I would not let the artist know how perfectly unwelcome he was, and I stepped on John's toe as he was telling our guest that we had taken out the tonneau just to avoid the possibility of lugging anyone along. After we passed beyond the Porto del Popolo, with no one to see him sitting up there like a drooping tiger, he was rather a useful companion—kept the dust off us splendidly, and displayed an ignorance about the machine that gave my own knowledge a peculiar lustre.

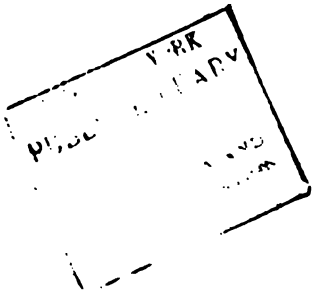
Our road for the next two hundred miles lay over the famous Via Flaminia. We had chosen it with care because it carried us through a country not greatly travelled, yet comprising all the various characteristics of an Italian landscape, and, as John told Douglas Warwick, very good "going" besides. The Douglas Warwick thought it ought to be just as good coming, and then his hat blew off.

After that it is not necessary to say that we were going down hill and getting the power to fly up the next rather steep grade on the high speed. Hats always blow off going down hill with an ascent ahead of one, and if there are no hats to blow off there is a team of oxen blocking the path at the foot, although



CIVITA CASTELLANA

"'Possibly Lucretia Borgia herself has stopped in this old fortress'"



should they by any chance fail to greet one at the foot of the hill, then they will be waiting near the summit of the next one, so that he has to go into the low speed or run the chance of being ditched.

There is one difference between the cart in the middle of the road in America and the cart over here. In Italy it is blocking the road because the driver doesn't think, and in our country it is blocking the road because he does think. Either way it makes our angry passions rise, and since John couldn't say anything to Douglas Warwick when he came back with his cap, he said some perfectly shocking things to the next driver of an ox team, and though it was in English, the man understood perfectly. Swearing need never be in Volapük.

We had intended to stop at Castelnuovo en route to Civita Castellana, where we would lunch, and we thought we had done so until leaving the farmhouse, which we took for the outskirts of the town. Then we saw the city on the side of a hill, and so far out of our way that we decided to continue on our straight path. We had some difficulty leaving the farmhouse, as Douglas Warwick decided to sketch it, and it was then that his true nature asserted itself. Although he was a guest, although the food at the next place was starred in the Baedeker, although we were ready for it, and had reached the peevish stage which is Delsarte for hunger, still that artist would not stir. The truth was nothing to him. "Directly," he would cry cheerily; "one more

shadow," lying like fury. "It's going to be very nice—you'll like it yourself, Ward."

"Not unless I can eat it," snapped back the host.

"It represents food eventually, you know," returned the worker. And John got under the car and told the driving shaft if he ever gave an ice cream soda for hen scratches like that, may he eat his hat. John always wants to eat his hat when he gets savage. He was probably a goat in some past state, but had we stayed away from food much longer we would both have eaten the artist's, ear muffs and all.

It was good spaghetti at Civita Castellana, quite the best we had ever devoured, and we watched eagerly to see if the painter enjoyed it also. We knew if this was an eating day we might reach Narni by early afternoon, but should he be lost in reflection, then the divine afflatus was upon him and he would sketch where he listeth if he had to puncture a tire to stay us. He ate little and called the string-beans turnips, which we observed with a sinking heart. Later John and I met in a corner and decided to declare the town a vicious place and most filthy.

"Better take a little rest," said John to him kindly, "while I get the car ready." But not that artistic grasshopper.

"No rest like congenial work, Ward," he exclaimed, picking up his kit. "There is a fine fortress here, built by Alexander VI., a most immoral Pope, but with excellent ideas on architecture. Must

be some good in a man who leaves these monuments behind."

John glared at me.

"I think it has been quite modernised," I gasped, sitting on the guidebook.

"Fact," hurries in John. "Colonial porches, Queen Anne windows and all that sort of thing, you know."

"Well, only one way to settle it," said our smiling guest. "Coming too, Mrs. Ward?" And I did, and kept off the children, that he might work in peace. Wonderful drawing power, these artists!

"Possibly Lucretia Borgia herself has stopped in this old fortress," he imparted, after we had seated ourselves on the northern rampart. "Her father, the Pope, married her to Giovanni Sforza of Pesaro, and she must have passed over this road many times in going to Rome. Then, later, she followed the Via Flaminia to Ferrara, escorted by a splendid cavalcade to meet her third husband, one of the Este family."

I was a little shocked, because even the Minerva Club, with its broad policy, never alludes to Alexander VI. and his daughter. I intimated as much, delicately, of course.

"There never has been any proof that Lucretia was a monster," retorted the Douglas Warwick quite warmly, as though he knew the lady and had taken tea with her. "From all I can learn, she was simply a weak, passive woman. Her brother, Cæsar Borgia, was a horrible fiend. Aided by his father, he

deposed all the petty rulers of the Umbrian cities, through which you will pass, and reigned fiercely in their places. The old Pope was a beast with but two traits worthy of a human creature. He was gentleness itself with his children and, crowning virtue, he built fine strongholds."

"Oh, well," I replied stiffly, "if you judge a man's moral worth by his architectural ability—No," I added hastily, as he was about to interrupt, "the Borgia are not a family I think it proper to discuss."

He quite snorted with anger, but I felt it was time to stop him. One can never tell what an artist is going to say, painting from the nude so much. Besides, he was extremely well posted, and, on the whole, I preferred him in the motor car, ignorantly asking me about carbureters.

There were hills from that time on—the foothills of the Apennines—and there was a beautiful landscape of well-farmed valleys and dark-scarred rock showing many traces of Etrurian tombs, bits of Roman ruins and frequent columns bearing the crossed keys and mitre of past Popes. The artist said it was a mute story of the Invaders—rude heathen, great warriors, and Holy Church; but it was the crossed keys and papal mitre that turned me cold.

By the time we had reached Ortricoli the sky was clouded, which for lack of shadow rescued us from any attempt to have it immortalised on paper, but gave our companion an opportunity of arranging his

cap for rain, although John assured him that, lacking a canopy, such a thing was impossible.

"Still, if you had a canopy and it did rain you would use it, wouldn't you?" persisted Douglas Warwick.

John begrudgingly admitted the possibility.

"Well, that's the way I feel about the cap. I paid extra for this waterproof attachment, and I ought to use it."

John kicked his beloved machine in the front hub and we went at the cap. The directions said "with a few deft twists" the inside of the headgear, which was lined with rubber, could be transposed into a most satisfactory protection for the heaviest storms, but the very suggestion that we must work deftly seemed to turn our fingers into thumbs, and the results were various. It seemed to please the artist, who likened it to modelling in clay, and was most enthusiastic over the prairie dog I evolved. John suggested that we leave it as a prairie dog, since it was certainly at its best in that form, but our guest stuck to his task, and finally got away, wearing a sort of vacuum cap, used generally for the propagation of hair. The sun came out immediately, although there had been rain on the road we were travelling, making the hills dangerously slippery, and here is told of the Dropping of the Sprag.

The sprag had been an afterthought, and had been sent on from the factory at John's request in case we should find ourselves obliged to change from

ordered, and sat tight on its sto
the hill was reached.

I say *the* hill, for while we may
skip over—many higher ones, su
find one that will so suddenly sl
John Bunyan's Christian, had he
the stony way, would have called i
Hill for Proud Motors." It slyl
us around the corner of another hil
we had been rolling up on the hig
slimy with wet clay, its precipitou
fully unguarded by walls, and it
twenty per cent. Before John had a
into the low speed we were half way u
the engine laboured, and as John
into the neutral the rear wheel slip
skidded towards the exposed cliff and
backwards. The brake was as the
child.

"Drop th

"I think," said Douglas Warwick, when we had reached the top, "that something hit your Girlie." But John and I only smiled, and both had cognac when we reached the Hotel of The Angel.

I don't know which angel has been so honoured, but we were very near all of them in our perch at Narni, and our windows gave upon the depths to which an angel or a human might fall if either leaned over too far. The town itself was a delightful one of crooked streets, with an ugly old castle way up aloft, which, like the fortress of Alexander, is used as a prison. What would they do in Italy for prisons and barracks if it wasn't for old castles? I don't object to these uses particularly, but when they turn a stronghold with a lovely moat around it into a post-office, I am aggravated to the point of never buying a stamp.

John was very happy in Narni. His sprag and his engine had worked beautifully, and the owner of the stable, the *rimessa*, as it is called here, where The Means was kept, had locked the door and presented him with the key. It was as big as the key of the Bastile, and if I lost track of him for an instant the villagers would ask if the signora was looking for the signor of the key, and if he was not in any of the dark ways he would surely be found in the stable or locking or unlocking the door with the air of a landed proprietor.

This absorption led us into a difficulty before the night was over—or was it the fault of the artist?

He had accompanied us in a random fashion on our walks, breaking away suddenly every now and then to squint at a building, an act which terrorised the children, who made horns with their fingers to keep off his evil eye, so it was not surprising when bedtime came to find him missing; but John, in fear that he had wandered over the cliff, started on what he called a still hunt. It developed into a hunt that was about as quiet as that old play of "The Still Alarm," in which everybody just "hollers" all the time.

It was John falling up and down the staircase streets coupled with the awful things he said that broke the silences at the beginning of the hunt. The few lights had been extinguished, and I never knew a moon to shine so "fitfully" before. It would lure us into a corner that seemed quite bright, and then, suddenly "fitting," leave us there to find our way out. Twice I bumped into John and screamed "Burglar! Burglar!" as one naturally does in such an instance, before he could stop me, and it irritated him. He said no one would know what I meant if I cried "Burglar" anyway, and pondering over that in the dark, the thought became dreadful. We might be murdered in any one of the corners, and not a soul would come to our call for h lp, although John with his dying breath would probably Italianise his speech and faintly ask for "helperia."

In consequence I refused to go into any more dark ways, not that I place any value on my life, but the cutthroats would probably take my rings also, and I



NARNI

"The wide street of the priory"

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am perfectly devoted to my ruby. Indeed, I was so fearful, as we felt our way back to the *piazza*, that I took it off for safekeeping. Then John jolted me again, and of course I dropped it. Carrying the ring doubled up in my hand seemed an excellent safeguard until it fell, and then I knew by my great reluctance to tell John about it that I had been doing a foolish thing. I had some thought of marking the spot by dropping my handkerchief and sending one of the hotel servants with a lantern to hunt for them both. The "I Shot an Arrow" song suggested it, but John heard the tinkle, and, stopping, asked me if I could have lost anything.

"Could I?" I repeated cautiously. "I suppose I could. I lost three side combs last week, and my Aunt Jane is always losing things."

"Suppose you take an inventory," suggested John.

"Wouldn't that be a waste of time?" I replied. "I've a good many things on, but only one thing is dropped. Let us strike matches and look, first for what is lost and afterwards at what is left." You see I wasn't going to confess unless I had to.

In an incredibly short time, as is always the case when a man strikes a match and holds it to the ground, the street swarmed with people. I don't know where they came from. They were not around when we needed them, and they all began hunting with us in a vague way, quite ready to accept whatever the search yielded. One man, however, was

braver, and asked John for what he was seeking. I had feared this, for it embarrassed John, not knowing himself what he was seeking, and he stammered and simpered, and jerked out something airily about "just looking for a friend."

The statement created a great deal of ill-concealed merriment, and when I found the ring he started to prove to that "aggregation of Allobrogi" that he had a friend and a lost friend, and if he couldn't find him by striking matches, he would see what the power of the human voice could do. Then began his walking through the wide street of the Priory, making horrible the quiet of the night by loud halloas and cries of "Douglas Warwick," and sometimes other expressions not dignified, but quite as impressive to the inhabitants of Narni, who, following in our wake, little wotted the import of his words.

"Come out, you shine!" bellowed John as he reached the *piazza*. "Answer, doggone you!" "I suppose you think you're cute!" he launched successively, and lashed himself into further vituperation.

I aided a little. "Mr. Warwick, are you killed?" I called three times distinctly, and the third time I was quite sure I had a reply. It was way off, but as I told John, it was more than he had received with all of his abuse.

"That's the only way to get at him," he answered wildly. "If I'll insult him, he'll have to come out to fight me. He's skulking somewhere studying

shadows. Oh, yes," continuing with raised voice, "I know your kind, you low, miserable hound; come on out!"

I never saw John so disgracefully annoyed, and his fractiousness increased when I pointed out that there was no use calling upon a man when you gave him no time to answer. Just before he reached the frothing stage two *carabinieri* appeared (they always go in pairs, one protecting the other) and demanded an explanation. Their comment was disconcerting to John, but full of delightful suggestiveness to the people.

"We saw the signor, yes, but going into the stable with yourself. That is the last that has been heard of him," and they mouthed the words like a tiger licking his chops, while a stir went through the crowd.

John was hurt, but calm. He offered the hospitality of his stable to the officers, to the town. He produced the large key; he himself would go with them; he himself would make side bets on the way with any "*sportman*" in the village that the stable housed only the auto. He himself would eat his hat should the Douglas Warwick be found therein.

I am glad for the letter of credit that John's bets were not taken. The artist was found at a small window in the haymow, whither he had climbed unnoticed by John to study sunset effects in the valley. He was very much alive, but not angry. This was a disappointment to the *carabinieri* and the people.

Next to a dead artist an angry one would have been most welcome. The crowd dispersed, but the guard lingered. They would accept two francs from the shouting gentleman for their trouble? Yes, and many thanks. They would drink to the health of the signora. They would wish the strangers *buon' riposo*. The incident was closed.

The angels brought good repose indeed, although towards morning a train of cars rattled along at the foot of the ravine six hundred feet below, and a little later I heard the sound of a horn with the rush of an automobile as it entered the village; the motor seemed the more natural manner of transportation, for this was the first suggestion of the iron monster since we had entered Italy, and I turned in my bed, joyfully conscious that travelling in the grey dawn was to us a matter of choice, not schedule; but as I turned, joyfully, I did not know that it was Mrs. Baring who had so chosen.

Chapter VIII

JOHN and the artist called Mrs. Baring's appearance "a delightful surprise," and I kissed her warmly, but there is no such thing as a delightful surprise or even a pleasant one. Nothing in life that can happen before one has time to reach for a powder puff can be classed as an occasion for enjoyment. It is not restful. Mrs. Baring is not restful—good, but wearing.

Miss Grey probably feels as I do. At *déjeuner* she was reading up on Civita Castellana, twenty miles back. She says that is the worst feature of autoing; one keeps outrunning the guide, and she often finds she has passed two days before the place she has just reached in her "authority." She had determined not to stick her head out while in Narni. "I have read about the place," picking up the book; "'it is a very picturesque town with an extensive View, but its streets are dirty.' You see, I can get dirty streets at home, and we had the View all along the way."

"Yes," spoke Mrs. Baring (flashing), "there were quantities of the article, but no matter how fast we went, we could never catch up with it. Wasn't it peculiar?"

"Extremely sad," assented Douglas Warwick, not getting the gist of the expression, but noting the regret in her voice.

"It's the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, I guess," said John, "and it sure is a pot of gold to an inn keeper. This angelic host—no irreverence, Peggy; I mean host of The Angel—breakfasts us on the balcony of his ancestors, feeds our eyes with the Valley of the Nar and our stomachs with a bad omelette, takes excellent toll for same, and attributes his star in Baedeker to the cuisine. And it's nothing but ether, several uninterrupted miles of it, with a few rocks at the other end, that keeps us from throwing him over the precipice."

"There is no such thing as a bad omelette in Italy," I practically expostulated. "It's a sad blow to all those striving to become good housewives to witness an omelette puffing itself up in a spider that is never washed from one year's end to the other. Of course, just wiping it out with paper is the secret of the success, but less *soufflé* and more soap would be welcome to me. You see, I'm a member of the Daughters of Hygiene back in New York."

"Isn't this frivolous talk for those who are at the portal of Umbria?" asked Mrs. Baring, bored because she didn't belong.

I didn't like that. It was a direct slur on my choice of conversational topics, and I looked at John for support. He rose, not to any height, but still rose.

"Oh, I don't know," he made answer; "I think we Americans might lecture very profitably to our Italian friends as we run through their towns. 'How to Know a Bathtub When You See One' would be instructive, and a short talk from the back of the motor on 'Germ-Proof Homes' ought to reach the young housekeepers. I'll polish up the idea to-night in Spoleto."

"I wouldn't do much meddling with customs in Spoleto if I were you, Ward," said the painter. "They have some fifteen centuries of fighters back of them, and one of the barbarian rulers, a Swabian, styling himself as the enemy of God, of pity and of mercy, set an example which was cheerfully emulated by his people."

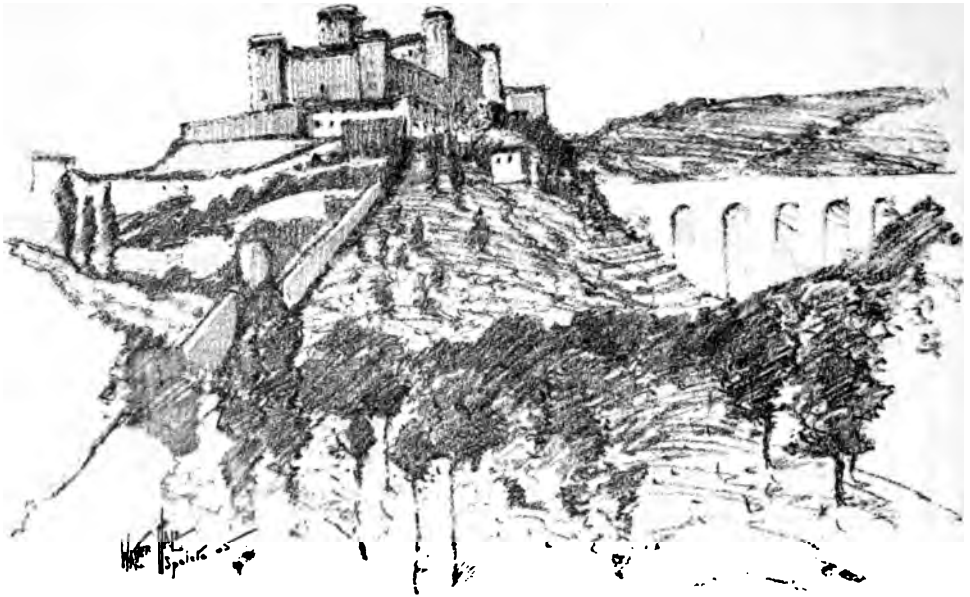
"They stopped fighting long enough to build an aqueduct," interposed Miss Grey, looking up from her book. "It's the highest in the world—three hundred feet, and seven hundred feet long. I do hope we can see it."

"I don't see how we can avoid it very well if your measurements are correct," John replied.

"No, I suppose not," she made answer. "It is not so easy with the cathedral, however, for my book says 'the cathedral can be seen from the station,' yet makes no other mention of it, and probably we don't come in that way. That's one of the advantages of travelling by rail," she added despondently. "My guide always tells me what can be seen from the depot."

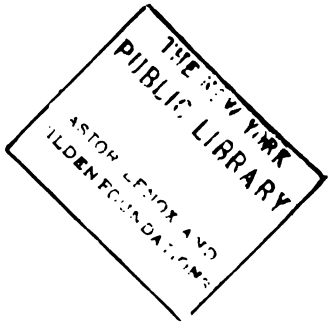
It was Mrs. Barin
plans. "Then to-morrow we
to Foligno."

John actually hesitated, wh
our souvenir postals, and ther
keep us! But I moved back m
him a dreadful look, ordered c
"We will spend the night in Spo
answer. It annoyed John. He
that some day, some time, someone
for a few steps, and when I endeav
engine to accelerate matters he pus
me with all Narni looking on, and M
ing middle distances with the artis
away. He was quite white with ra
and muttered something very indis
breaking my arm if I did that again
I never fail to catch the im
ways worth ..



SPOLETO

"It sat on a hill clothed to the throat in vineyards"


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And later, "Threatens to break my arm. Is there no succour near?" I could see just how it would look on the page, the lines slanting up, after the peculiar fashion of my chirography, that shows so plainly "benevolence, cheery spirit and inclination to morbidness." It ought to have been a glowing moment, but it wasn't, and when John told me, as we rolled out of the city, of the funny way crank handles have of flying back and breaking the arms of the inexperienced unless they are grabbed away most unceremoniously, I blew my nose hard, then laughed because the sun was shining, and sang all of the first act of "The Schoolgirl!" It was such a pleasant day.

Though discouraged as a starter of engines, I occupy several other posts of honour, which are not entirely sinecures. I am the Dropper of the Sprag, the Official Timekeeper, the Watchdog of the Odometer, and of late the Royal Pathfinder. As Dropper of the Sprag I must display some knowledge of grades—accuracy is not a requirement; but as Watchdog of the Odometer I must register in my little book always, always, the number of miles we have gone each day, even if I have to slip back into the stable when John isn't around to find out. I am a little forgetful, and John is fussy about miles.

As Official Timekeeper one might expect the same exactness. One might think John would demand it, but he doesn't. He pretends and thinks he does, and this is called the Automobile Conscience. It is the

Two Watch Scheme. Of
never openly admitted knowing tha
fast and that John's runs slow, so
take the time, and upon arrival Jol
from his watch, and we are both so
fine run we have made through the
we never think to compare our chron
big clocks in the towers that are
numerous, and when their bells beg
hour at twenty minutes of four, we
fire and look for the engines.

As Royal Pathfinder the qualificatio
and the sagacious nose of a hunting
enough to give one more than an or
acquaintance with these little guid
said had he watched his chart, he wo
ready for that hill on the other side
now I must follow these guides that
cyclers through Italy, and are of the
ice to all roadsters—at least he said
service. As f

hurled at them from our speeding car does not penetrate until we have gone around a curve. Even so, we have had to retrace but one mile of road, and that through an old dame whom we discovered on the way back had palsy, and waggled her head affirmatively to anything we asked. However, all in good time. When one has learned to motor with the spine relaxed, he knows the joy of the road, and when he has learned to feel that the path is right through an occult sense, he is part of the road itself, and the life of the vagabond is his.

Italian towns are like the little girl with the curl in the middle of her forehead. When they are good, they are very, very good, but when they are bad they are like Terni. Terni was a town with an attraction—falls, very splendid ones, Baedeker says, four miles from the town. It was a depressing moment for us. We knew that we should go; the artist said so and the cab drivers, the latter even offering to take us there, and there were seven official guides who would enjoy the ride and point out mulberry-trees on the way.

As usual, the spirit of opposition that has kept us out of all the show places in Europe rose up and possessed us, and when we found a whole wall of the Albergo Europa's courtyard displaying a painting of the turbulent waters, we gave a glad cry of admiration, as though the genuine article rose before us. John pantomimed stepping hurriedly from a carriage, and rushed towards the beautiful scene,

then, ever the perfect gentleman, he returned to me, for I was somewhat hampered by a trained gown of rich brocade, and half carried me over the rocky dell towards the booming cataract. We commented to the servants of the Hotel Europa, who had gathered curiously about us, on the moisture of the spray that threw its sparkling dewdrops upon us, and my husband, with loving care, covered the long plumes on my hat with his exquisite handkerchief (through which the gasoline had been strained).

A goodly crowd had now gathered, but this did not surprise us, for the beautiful sight was well worth a visit, and, loath to leave the place, we ordered from the waiters vermouth and selzer to be served directly in front of the largest fall. The servants of the hotel, who by this time, with the Italian appreciation of all mimicry, had apportioned to us only that mild place among lunatics to which we really belong, received our order gravely. Then, after some whispered delay, while John's thirst was rapidly developing, returned empty handed and solemnly went through the pantomime of serving the beverage.

The principal actors in the audience roared with delight. The sum of thirty-eight cents was circulated among the audience, and the real mixture was produced by the lesser lights of the drama. Truly, it is a poor Italian town which lacks both architecture and artists.

If Terni was a plain, Spoleto was a peak, the

zenith of one's ambition and the acme of delight. It sat on a hill clothed to the throat in vineyards, and built houses leaning out at right angles over the valley. If one were to look from the windows on the under side, he would surely fall on his neighbour below; but to atone for such waywardness, there was a main street comparatively level and flagged with great square blocks. It is necessary to have a street like this in all the Italian towns, that the little iron tables on the sidewalk belonging to the *caffés* can get a purchase without putting one of their iron feet in the lap of the guest; and when we drive through these thoroughfares towards evening, with the smiling people picking up their tables to make way for us, an escort of little boys hurrahing behind, and a hand organ reeling out a march ahead, we are just as near greatness as we ever shall be.

In Spoleto we had not only a big motor car to live up to, but the Hotel Lucini, and a bedroom of the Hotel Lucini and the chairs of the bedroom of the Hotel Lucini. When John had backed the auto for two blocks up a narrow street into a stable (our democratic Means taking it as gracefully as though King Vittorio Emanuele himself were dismissing it from his presence) and approached our room, I called to him. "Act as though you were used to it," was my warning, and John, entering, and finding me sitting in an ancient throne chair, threw himself on a *quattro cento fauteil*, yawned, and nodding to the maid in attendance, remarked that this was indeed

reminiscent of his far-away home. While we had been allotted the best chamber, as befitted a motor-car king, the treasures of the house were not all contained in the spare room. The place was a museum of old china, paintings and carvings, left about with a faith in the honesty of man that tempted one to teach the proprietor the lesson learned only by experience.

I was so impressed with the trappings of my hostelry that nothing less aristocratic than the search for coats-of-arms would tempt me out into the narrow ways. There I would go about, craning my neck to get a view of the escutcheons that hung over the doors, so eager that all the Spoletese, to whom arms were most ordinary matters, thought I had made some interesting discovery, and followed me down the hill with their necks stretched in imitation of mine. If there was anything unusual in the emblem of a Pope, with the quarterings of some history-maker of Umbria glowering down over the door of the shoemaker or the cheese-monger, then the signora came from a mad country that knew nothing of the sweets of republicanism and of the mingling of rich and poor.

Whenever we are overcome by the gloom of past Italian history, we go into the level flagged street, which is always named after King Humbert or Garibaldi or one of the very new heroes. Nothing can be newer than these heroes except the street itself, but always Italian in character, never Kokomo,

Indiana, or Jackson, Michigan. In Spoleto John found one thing he considered newer even than this street—found it in the *caffé*—and that was a really pretty woman, Italian, and, to adopt our East Side Polish dialect, a "stylisher." Women in Italy are rarely lacking in good looks; they average much better than we do, but when they are beautiful, and "stylishers" besides, they are rooted in carriages, and never get out until within their courtyards, when the gorgeous bewanded porter shuts the gates, so that for all we know it may be quite true that the "Queen of Spain *has* no legs."

It did John a great deal of good to see a very pretty woman in a shirt-waist suit standing on two very nice French-heeled feet. It was "Art for Art's sake" with him, he said, and while I knew it was nothing of the sort, I thought if he could be distracted from that giraffe, Mrs. Baring, I wasn't the narrow kind of a wife to prevent his admiring her. I did, too, and so did everyone else in the *caffé*, and when she said "*complimenti*" to the patrons, and went out with an elderly griffin, John and I rose as one man and followed her. She led us over hill and dale, and finally disappeared through a chink in the wall, or seemingly so, and, as John remarked mysteriously, proving she was a fairy just as he had thought from the first—not a flesh and blood "stylisher" after all. Still, I endeavoured to keep up his enthusiasm in the effort to dispel old illusions. "Quite the best looking woman I have

seen in Italy, John," This over coffee in the little garden.

"Yes," replied John absently; "always excepting you—and Mrs. Baring."

At this reference to the huge shadow that was darkening my life, I didn't start or break my coffee cup or do anything dramatic, but I made a resolve, a deep one and a good one, of course; no resolves can be bad, the word is onomatopœic. This one was to flee from that Nemesis on our track if I had to keep the throttle open with my life's blood. It's generally done with the foot, so my agitation may be understood.

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When I registered that vow last night in Spoleto I little knew what avail would be my heart's blood upon the throttle, if John's foot was there, too, or what a relentless foot it was, and how deaf to my entreaties. And as I sit in my room at Foligno, with the rain splashing against the window pane, I wonder if surely this is not the worst that can happen to me. Perhaps some day this will be only a mild little thing that was needed to form my character. I thought one formed characters at clubs—never in a hotel bedroom in Foligno. But I keep learning and learning.

It was such a pleasant day in Spoleto. *Musica* in the morning under our windows, an accordeon, a guitar and a woman who watched for the money. I kept throwing them down pennies at the end of each

piece, just as they would be going round the corner. Then they would laugh and come back and play again. The children don't dance on the pavements here as they do in New York, and when I danced round my big room all the neighbourhood stood outside of the windows and kept time with their heads, the little ones crying, "*ancora, ancora, signorina,*" the *signorina* to flatter me, as though I were a young girl.

So I danced all the old-fashioned dances, the bon ton and the racquet, and gave them a taste of the two-step besides, which they loved. Even John stopped figuring up his gasoline expense list and whistled with them, and it occurred to me with just half a chance I could make him forget all about the pretty Italian and Mrs. Baring and even the motor car; and while it meant a very delicate manipulation of the plans for my future good, and might possibly conflict a little with gathering the evidence for my divorce, still it would be very nice to have more power, even if I didn't have as much muscle as large, tall women.

John, of course, was not to know of this fight for his soul, for that is what the struggle will mean—no petty jealousy, although a great wave of pain comes over me now and then, a sick feeling around my heart, and later an awful desire to break all the furniture in the room—just break it to be breaking. I never felt anything like it before, and I think it must be Strength of Purpose.

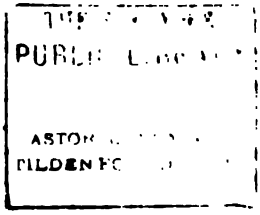
I don't know why one small lie can make so much trouble when I am sure I've told worse ones, and nothing has happened at all, especially since this was for John's soul. He was sleeping when it happened, before dinner in Spoleto; I was in the garden, and I heard that whirring sound of Mrs. Baring's Dago. It's always noisier than ours, but to-day it was much noisier, and the engine laboured as it came up to the hotel. Miss Grey was looking nervous, but I didn't feel sorry for anybody but myself and for John, who would soon be in the toils again.

Here she was choo-chooing into my Eden, and we weren't to meet until Foligno, as she perfectly understood. She simply couldn't keep away from John, and it made me so furious that I slipped down and whispered to the porter to tell her we had left. I heard her exclaim in disappointment, and then go on towards Foligno. I didn't hear what she had said, because I was hiding behind a sixth century sarcophagus. I don't know why, only I remembered as I did so that I always hid when I was a little girl and told a fib. I thought I was getting away from God. I met the porter an hour afterwards, and he said the *grande signora* had found that her cylinder oil had been stolen from her tool chest at Narni, and that she had hoped to borrow some from us. However, she had decided to go on to Foligno and run the chance of overheated bearings. I was terribly frightened, and gave the man two francs to keep him quiet. Then I tried to induce John to get away



GUBBIO
"It lies at the foot of the Apennines....forgotten by the world"




PUBLIC
ASTOR
TILDEN FO



early, but he wanted the run after dinner with his searchlight going, and was perfectly obdurate. He's very fond of his searchlight, and would use it as a bedroom candle if he could, so there was nothing for it but to wait, and I wasn't altogether happy. It seemed so strange that one had to be underhanded when struggling for a soul.

The ride through the dusk would have been delightful but for a storm that, canopy or no canopy, could not wait until we got to Foligno, since, as it rumbled out, it had given us fair warning. John didn't seem to mind. He pretends to like rain, but I was wet, and miserable in my heart, and while he wasn't very solicitous for me, he kept hoping all the time that Mrs. Baring was safely sheltered.

"She's a woman, after all, you know, if she does run her own car. She'll be wet to the skin. It's too bad. She ought to have a man to look after her. She—Why, what's the matter, Peggy?" For I had jerked the searchlight from the side of the road to the path ahead and held it there with a steady hand. Again he asked the question, but I did not answer him, and he drove on in our narrow streak of light, little knowing that back on the highway, half concealed in a nook of the road, lay Mrs. Baring's disabled motor car, with Mrs. Baring working over it.

There is no use attempting to recount all of the thoughts that pass through a woman's mind when she is angry, afraid and conscience-stricken, but

after two hours at the hotel, with John foaming around for Mrs. Baring's safety, I took hold of the back of a chair, with my eyes glued on the floor, and began a sort of prepared speech. I didn't know I had been preparing it until I started. Then it all sounded familiar, as though I had repeated it many times before.

"If you want to know where Mrs. Baring is," I said, "you will find her back on the road near the Temple of Clitumnus with that female companion of hers, working on the car. Her cylinder oil had been stolen at Narni, and they stopped on the way through Spoleto to ask if you had gone. I sent word you had."

If John had believed me I never would have forgiven him, although it was hard to go over it all again. When the truth came to him, every bit of it, my lying, as well as Mrs. Baring with the breakdown, he didn't wait for leggings or oilskins, but grabbed his cap and started for the door. I stepped in front of it.

"Say something, John!" I cried. He didn't touch me—just looked.

"There isn't a creature so mean and small who travels the road who will not help a fellow in distress. There isn't a woman of the class you draw away from who would hit one of her kind when down." And John thrust open the door.

"John, I'm sorry—I'm sorry, John," but the door had slammed.

Chapter IX

I SUPPOSE all husbands and wives are the same. Of a sudden one of them finds that the other is a poor, miserable thing, and the poor, miserable thing, who had known about herself all along, but was trying to keep it a secret, thinks that now the end has come, and there will be no more peace and happiness in her life. She stays awake all night over it, thinking how strange their attitude will be towards each other when they sit opposite at breakfast, and she comes into the room trembling terribly, and there the other person, the strong, good one, is stirring his coffee, and he says, "Well, what shall we do today?" Then the poor, miserable one, ready for heroics, says instead, "Anything at all, John," or whatever his name is, of course, and stirs her coffee too.

From that time they go on to all intents and purposes the same as ever, but in his heart he must loathe her, and the poor, miserable one knows that she must behave herself and be very loving to him in order to blot out from his mind the ugly memory of the night before. And she must keep it up forever and forever—or for days, anyway.

So I determined to do so, although I felt a little sorry for myself when I realised that I must go through life misunderstood, for nobody can save a

man's soul and tell him about it, too. There's nothing at all romantic about that. Besides, he would laugh. If Mrs. Baring ever heard of it I should die of shame. I'd rather have her think I told that lie just to spite her. But I'd rather above all things that she would never know anything about it, and I don't think she will. When the two cars came into the town about midnight, John having oiled her engine on the road, he came to my door and asked if I were asleep.

"John, of course not," I quavered. "I——"

"Don't say anything more," he broke in. "I don't pretend to understand womenkind. The fact remains that you did it. I just want to tell you that Mrs. Baring thinks the servant in Spoleto misunderstood her, and that I heard the truth about her breakdown from a clout whom she had dispatched to Foligno for assistance, but who has probably strayed to some wayside tavern. She said she had tried to attract our attention when we passed, but we were gone too quickly. I thank the Lord I was able to get you out of it so easily." Then he went into his room.

So I continued meek all the morning, and poked about with the Douglas Warwick, who had arrived on an early train and was sketching like mad. Foligno has a beautiful square and some handsome palaces, and, as always, enough *Italiani* about to make the world gay. I like to go into the churches through these towns; not being great show places,

there are no sacristans to swoop down and drive you from altar to altar, and no beggars to hold you up for doing the same to the leather curtains at the door.

There is a fine High Altar in the cathedral, with the bees of the Roman Barberini family decorating it. I don't know whether in imitating the altar in St. Peter's they have copied the emblem too, or whether the Barberini, having some honey to secure, sent a few bronze bees to Foligno to assist their scheme. The bronze on the altar at St. Peter's they stole from the Pantheon, with beelike energy converting all within their reach to their own purposes, and, like every family who gave munificently in those centuries, placarded the offerings with their arms. It would seem they had very little faith in the Creator's memory, that they must keep continually jogging it with the sight of their armorial bearings for the sake of future blessedness, or else, lacking newspapers, it may have been the natural desire of mankind to see his name in print.

With no beggars about to enrich, I left a small offering in the shape of four *soldi* in the hand of a ragged little urchin who lay asleep by the side of a very dangerous-looking stone beast at the church door. The beast was going to attack me at first, as he said the little boy had no home to speak of, and he had taken him under his carven paw, but on seeing the four cents he smiled, as well as a beast could smile who had lost one-half his head, and roared a

... its support.
his stone tail at the artist and me,
wink very well, having lost both
made frantic signs for him not to t
"*buono sportman*," for he kept mut
ther reflection the little boy flew t
under whose portal we were standin
large casserole of *pasta* to prove tha
real, but instead of three cents, the
cost but one of the strange *soldi*, w
the signora of the shop told him (sh
the scene and could wink with the best
the pennies must have come from Do
self. So the ragged little boy stood
the sign of the cross over his dish,
and the stone beast ate the spaghetti
fashion. And that reminded me to re
that we were an hour late for luncheo

John said he would like to write a b
I Didn't See in Foligno." What he
woodyard where th...

works were under the seat, musty and ill kept, and the whole thing was so gloomy in appearance that we were not surprised to hear that the owner had gone to Rome, ostensibly to get a new tire, but we knew never to return.

John and Mrs. Baring agreed that even a mild eight horse-power phaeton would rebel with such lack of care, and that the wise motorist treats his engine well, for it can be a good friend and a dangerous enemy.

"Take a horse," said John, crawling joyfully around his car with the oil can, "and let it go uncurried and unrubbed for a month, fed at irregular intervals and watered when you've got the time, and you'll find it can do about one-half the work that it did under good treatment. Now the same thing holds good with a car, and, moreover, like a horse, it's got to be petted and humoured a little. I've loved this engine ever since it struggled a hundred and twenty miles from Naples with a leaky valve as painful as a dislocated shoulder, settling down every now and then for a rest, but picking up courage after a little nursing and going at it again. I tell you when I see what it has been doing these last few days, now that it's well, I feel like taking off my hat to it."

This is known as Motor Love, and as I think John was on the verge of tears, I ripped off his rubber gloves, also Mrs. Baring's, and drove them in to luncheon. When that woman is around her car in

the stable yard I like her. It's when she's flashing her teeth and urging us to change our route because it is "so nice" for us all to be together that I want to cry out something perfectly unladylike, such as "Oh, thunder!" and walk out of the room. But as I said, my pride will prevent my letting her know how I feel, and I keep telling myself how kind she is to Miss Grey, and patient with Douglas Warwick, who is more helpless than I, and it also comes to me that there must be something very fine in her nature or John wouldn't like her so much. This thought, however, immediately fills me with such alarm that I hurry to forget all about it, or the strange desire again sweeps over me to break the furniture.

We had an accident outside of Foligno. I more than wish it hadn't happened, for it brought to me so vividly the courtesy of the road, which I had disregarded. We were going around a curve on the level when we were brought face to face with a heavy cart which was in the middle of the road, though gallantly striving to make way for us, but it moved too slowly, and John turned out for it, at the same time striking a bit of slippery going. The rear wheels skidded, made a three-quarters revolution and slipped back heavily into a ditch. The mud was up to the hubs, and it seemed that nothing but a derrick would get our big auto out.

The carter got off his wagon and uttering weird cries, summoned men from all directions, although



URBINO

The Ducal Palace—"gloomy and forbidding"

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the country had seemed quite unpeopled. Little children came racing down the road, old dames popped their heads through the hedges, and the incident was immediately converted into an occasion for enjoyment. I had not squealed nor tried to get out, and John had said "Good Girl!" under his breath, nor would the men allow me to descend into the mud of the road, and lacking the usual to-do over the situation, put their shoulders to the rear wheels, and with a concerted "Ah-aah!" like the honk of a wild goose, lifted the car out, then stood sweating before us, smiling fondly at their muscles.

After this the miracle of miracles happened, for one and all they refused the handful of change John offered them. Comrades of the road were we and they, and when the money had been given to the children for a *festa*, they were doubly pleased, and extolled the kindness of their excellencies.

"Make the most of it, Peggy!" said John when we were again under way, with only mud to tell the tale. "You'll not be '*Excellenza*' in little old America with or without a motor car." So I sat up very straight, graciously distributing bows to our friends along the road. It was through these Apennines that John was advised to carry a revolver, but I thought it too dangerous a weapon to have around unless he kept it unloaded, and John said he didn't believe in bluff.

"It's only about once in a man's life when he will need a gun," he said, "and then he needs it bad.

On the other occasions, if I was found with one in my possession, it would do me more harm than good. I think my faithful sprag will answer all purposes." And John beamed fondly on his improvised knucks.

We saw nothing more savage than pigs to shoot on our way from Foligno to Rimini, and those were clasped round their waists as we passed by little pig girls, who were fearful for their charges. The wild things were flowers, and the masses of mountain beyond Gubbio, and the dangers of the road were being remedied by pleasant-looking highwaymen working where the rains had loosened the mountain walls. Once we were attacked. A great rock from a quarry above us rolled down directly in the centre of our path. The cry of the men at work came too late, and we passed over it, slightly tearing the apron and merely scratching the axles.

"I always wanted to know how much clearance we had under there," said John coolly, just like a hero in a play. And I adored him from the front row of our motor.

There is no lovelier country in the world than the province of Umbria, and with Mrs. Baring one day behind us, my husband close by, an extra tin of gasoline on the side and the engine taking most of the hills on the high speed, my cup of happiness was running over. The only blight was the diary in the basket, that John is so insistent upon my having out. He calls it "the green book," which shows some consideration, but to me it is the Doomsday Volume,

and I have grown to hate it. Perhaps, oh, surely, even after our divorce John will take me out for a spin now and then. I sometimes think I just can't give up this automobile!

We went through Nocera, and at Gualdo deserted our Via Flaminia for half a day, and drove on to Gubbio that we might spend the night in the most mediæval town of Italy. It lies at the foot of the Apennines, and is the open door to the Calvo Pass, which leads through the mountains to the other side. Isolated, forgotten by the world, it is like a hideous, crooked old woman. I was surprised to find children laughing in the tortuous streets. Towering over it is the great Palazzo dei Consoli, not as though it were part of the poor people who lived below, but frowning down at them, emblematic of the power of the nobles over the towns they owned.

The Thespian art is still encouraged in Gubbio. The porter of the Albergo San Marco, who refused to take any notice of us or our luggage until he could find his ancient gold-braided cap, told us before we had taken our rooms that there was a play that evening. He evidently feared we might go on unless inducements were held out, and after the dinner we might have considered it had not the Calvo Pass presented double difficulties in the night.

The crone who waited on us had said the Pass was too high for *automobili*, and we ourselves had read that heavy carriages did not go over it, but with the morning light we feared nothing, and John told

sation.

A small boy escorted us to the theatr
gested that he receive a carriage check
us at eleven, for nothing but Hop-c
bread crumbs could ever get us back
narrow, empty, winding streets, lighted
casional oil lamps, and down which th
mournfully; but John was for adventu
missed him with four cents imbursement

We took our seats in the *poltrone.*
it means the poltroons, for we saw at
had not done the right thing. Althoug
the best seats to be bought, and red ve
the real people, the *noblesse* of the city
three tiers of minute boxes that ran arou
torium, while the commoners stood at the
on the benches or lolled on the red velve
stituted the orchestra. Immediately ou
the city as motorists lost its prestige; h
as rich as Crœsus and eaten automobil

the power of the drama had taken hold of me and I would not move.

Perhaps I should not say it was the performers on the stage that held me fascinated—there were three at the time—but rather a fourth voice that spoke unceasingly, which I at first took to be some noisy person on the red velvets, and glared at them all. Then I thought the play might be a spirit one, Ibsen's "Ghosts," perhaps, with a new interpretation, and I endeavoured to trace the spirit actor who had such a very long part.

He was under none of the chairs, nor behind the handsome escritoire as it was painted on the back drop, but I finally found him cunningly hidden under half a shell which came out from the footlights with its back to us, and then I knew he was the prompter. These creatures are the curse of the Continental theatre and a relic of barbarism, toned down and dulled into quiet in the big city theatres, but in Gubbio the one voice that was never still, never modulated. I am sure he must have once been an actor himself, for, as the plot thickened, he leaned out of his cubby-hole that rose about two feet above the stage and gesticulated as he read. I could see his hands waving wildly. His work was not appreciated by the Gubbiates, and when his voice rose until it drowned that of the performers, he was roundly hissed by the audience, just as though he were a villain *en coquille*. Now and then the leading woman would hiss at him, too, which rather marred

her rendition of the tender passages, and on one occasion she stopped altogether with a wonderful shrug, which said, "Play the part. Play it all yourself. I am only the leading lady. I cannot act. Oh, no; you are the *artisto* of this company. What? You arrest yourself? Ah, *grazie tante!* Perhaps I may continue!"

As for the acting, it was so much better in grade than little country companies at home, that my heart went out to them, and my admiration for their quiet art was extended to their indifference to scenery. Barring a back drop, there was no setting—the frames of doors only at the right and left of the stage serving for exits; the sides were quite exposed, and John made a bet with me that one of the company, in some absent-minded moment, would walk through the wall before the play was over—which bet he lost.

We left at 11.30. There was still another act and an afterpiece to come, but John wished to give himself time to get lost and to be found again. Had I felt that getting lost with John would have cut us off permanently from a certain pursuing motor-car I should not have encouraged the brigand, who, at 12.15, picked us out on a bridge that we had crossed ten times, and gently led us home. But no, it will take a much more complex skein of streets than those of Gubbio to save us from the skein of Mrs. Baring's Knitting.

Chapter X

If any Diogenes person meets in Gubbio a man with a green crocheted necktie and red cheeks let him blow out his lantern for he has found the honest man. Nor is he a man without temptation—he sells gasoline, and by weight instead of measure, which is the most mysterious way in the world, although cheaper for the buyer than by the litre, providing the dealer's tie is crocheted or that he bears other neck marks of uprightness.

But the green necktie man of Gubbio was not content with being honest, he was honest plus, for he kept coming back every half hour with *lire* which he had found on weighing and reweighing the contents of the "demijohna" did not belong to him. And as he would not give the coin to anyone but me, John decided he was paying for another and still another look, which is untrue, though blondes are scarce in Gubbio.

We needed this touch of comedy before our departure, for the Calvo Pass lay before us, and the honest gasoline man, when he learned that our car was only "eighteen horses," lifted his shoulders and his eyebrows. As soon as we had passed the city gates we were shut in the mountains and on the eight miles of up grade, but so perfect that in many places

we mistook it for the level and switched into the high speed, at which our engine trembled and was hastily restored to slower pace. The roadbed was good, and only the mountains themselves awesome. We met few carts, but many pedestrians, and reaching Scheggia, the other side of the Pass, found our friend the Via Flaminia waiting to accommodate us.

In spite of the grade down, we thought her a little set up in manner, and discovered that she must have but recently carried along a very heavy motor car, for the tracks were fresh. John was delighted. Automobiles are so seldom met with in this locality that a symptom of them like a wheel track stirs the motorist's heart, and as soon as I was sure the tires weren't Mrs. Baring's I was pleased too. The driver had taken the curves with all the care that John observed, only once going on the outside at a sharp corner, and skidding a bit with a grazed wall as a consequence.

I called John's attention to this, which he had endeavoured to ignore, being already very fond of the driver, and he said the man's wife had probably showed him a pink pigeon. This was the first reference that John had made to the pink pigeon which had happened in Scheggia. It fluttered up to a housetop as we were going through a narrow street packed full of people, and I gave what was meant to be a purely interior gasp of admiration, but it must have been a shriek, an exterior one, for John's eyes followed my finger, and in that minute a little

girl just big enough to toddle, did so, and right in front of the car. No pedestrian realises how quickly a motor car can stop, even when going down a flagged hill, so of course there was a cry from everybody, and one old man sprang for the child, but they both would have been down and the wheels upon them had John been driving horses.

The old man never hesitated, and I thought it was fine in him, for he must have believed the chances more against him than they were. We halted. The wise motorist never turns his back on possible ill feeling; it often means a stone between the shoulder blades. And I gave the little one a *lira*, telling the mother she was surely born for *buona fortuna;* so the mother was pleased, but we left the old man white lipped and scornful of our money, and, as I said before, John made that one single reference to the pink pigeon. Those are not the incidents of motoring that a man cares to dwell upon. But really, did anyone ever hear before of a pink pigeon?

We stopped at Cagli for luncheon, that is the car stopped in the street below, and we continued up several flights of steps before we found it. Then it was very poor, and I think the radiator of the motor got the best of us, for whenever I looked down upon it little boys were discovered poking bread crumbs through the coils. They may have thought there was some animal behind the bars that furnished the power, or possibly it was to lead me into believing that they didn't jump upon the tires when we weren't

watching. Pummeling the tires in the hope of making some impression is supposed to be great fun, and is prevented only by the administration of the shawl strap.

The shawl strap was not purchased with any such malevolent thought, but it has been put to that use and serves well in keeping hordes of the escorting party who follow in our wake from riding up the steep streets in the shadow of our big trunk. They are very cunning about this, too, and when I arise in my wrath and swirl the shawlstrap, slip off quickly and pretend to push, claiming largesse for the assistance upon arrival at the hotel.

This is but a small grievance, although it touches upon the most disagreeable element of motoring in Italy: the enforced expenditure for service and often for rooms and food beyond the usual price. To be sure the best rooms, the best food, and the most exaggerated attention is ours, from the first to the last toot of the horn. To be sure, barring the price of the gasoline (from three to five times the cost in America) our bills are about one-half what they would be travelling in the States, and the cooking and comfort infinitely better than that of our country hotels.

And it is not so much that we must pay more than we should, but that we cannot pay enough to satisfy the exaggerated ideas that the country people entertain of the prodigality of Americans, particularly of Americans who motor, for the car in Europe is



PESARO

"Pesaro is on the Adriatic, and fishes for a living"

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enjoyed only by the wealthiest classes. It hurts John and me a little, fond as we are of these people, and remembering their pleasure with our modest tips on former visits to see them fingering their goodly *pourboire* with scorn or astonishment. They must expect a rain of gold, and possibly they take their disappointment better than would we under the circumstances, for they generally line up to bid us *buon' viaggio* with at least an assumption of good will. I fear if Silas of New England thought the voyagers were rather mean he would be out in the stable kicking the horse at the hour of their departure.

But I have no good word for the Cagli signora's luncheon, which was poor at its best, though had it been excellent at its worst it was an astounding price —a dollar ninety, if you please—for Italy. Moreover she was deaf to our abuses, and lacking proper change we were obliged to pay her. We did it bitterly, and bitterly did the signora rue it, for as we were piling our books into the basket, the red Baedeker struck my eyes, and waving it before her I told the withering cheat that with the next edition she would be exposed. I, Baedeker, had spoken. At this development of the plot, the most dramatic situation in the life of a European inn keeper, she withdrew our ten *lire* piece from her purse and besought us to accept it, but we were deaf to her entreaties and stalked on. I hope Baedeker will forgive me. It was something to have refused the

money, and in the face of his anger I recommend no traveller to climb stone steps for Cagli luncheons.

We were immediately softened when beyond the gates. The landscape was the kind that is known as melting. We melted with it, and continued in this jelly state until Urbino greeted us. Heights are elegant for thoughts, but I find that John and I take our views differently. He looks down into the valley with satisfaction, seeing how high we've climbed, and this is called the Automobile Spirit, while I float around in the clouds all alone with my soul, and have delightful sensations looking back at my poor body with its turned-up nose (my soul has a fine nose) and thinking how easy it is to attain a spiritual eminence when on an earthly one.

Besides being high, Urbino is improving to the mind. There are things to see. Raphael was born there, and if one looks lost for a second in the streets he is immediately led to the Birthplace as though he could not possibly be seeking anything else. No one could seek the Ducal Palace, the other show place of the town, because it is always at his left or right, or directly in front or behind him. It has sides to satisfy all moods, part of it light and airy, some of it mediocre, and much of it gloomy and forbidding.

Indeed, if one cannot be suited with that ducky palace of the Duke's he had better follow the Via Mazzini down to the level square beyond the gates where the oxen have their nails manicured, and there

become a clod. It is an interesting sight even to a member of the Minerva Club, this shaping of the cloven hoof. There are four hundred great beasts in the plain at market day, all trying to get themselves sold or being tied into a frame that holds them like a vice while their hoofs are clipped. There is also pig bartering, and little baby lamb exchanging, and I was so stimulated by the bargaining that I took two cents off the chambermaid's tip and found her still complacent.

Mrs. Baring was at the hotel when I got back for luncheon. John had been cleaning the car, of course, and Douglas Warwick had ordered an omelette, but that was the last that had been seen of him until he was dragged from the Raphael birthplace and returned to what was by that time a hard yellow brick. I was surprised to observe the tendency on the part of Mrs. Baring to flirt with him. Not that he noticed it. He thought his omelette was a chicken, and was carving it joint from joint; nor that she cared a whit whether he noticed it or not. The fact remained that John did, and manifested his annoyance in the usual manly way by declaring that the *bif-steaka* was tough.

It was. But John is very amiable about his meals, as a rule, and it nettled me to think that Mrs. Baring was going to ruin his digestion as well as his soul. At this rate he would be a dyspeptic in a year, for a faultfinder is only another name for the creature, and driven by the thought of catering to an unlov-

ing, indigestible husband, made so through no error or poor cooking of mine, I prepared for the first entry in my diary. If he snapped at me down it should go, for what judge would deny a woman freedom who is doomed to sit opposite a man of fractious appetite? With Mrs. Baring there slyly flashing her teeth at the Other Man I found sufficient inducement to go on with my duty.

"John," I said, after some asparagus which was unfortunately irreproachable and the cheese had arrived, "this Gorgonzola is dreadful. Don't you think so?"

"Oh, I don't know," he replied, mind dulled by the asparagus. "Try some other kind, Peggy."

"I was not thinking of myself, John, but of you."

"Yes, dear, you're a love, and you shall have some nice fresh cheese. Here, *Cameriere*, no Peggy, I will do it. *La Signora, non piace questo formaggio, me porta un' altro*, what-you-may-call-it, and shuffle along you chuckle-headed moon face. What did I say? *Niente, niente*, just get a gait on. Oh, yes, *si si*, you put on the best front you can, wearing that shirt, we know it. I said this was better—*megliore, grazie, grazie* a whole lot. Here, chicky, dear, some nice cheese for my child."

Now you know there is no use trying to broaden with a husband narrowing one's life like that. However, it seemed to quiet Mrs. Baring for a moment, so I derived a little happiness from my defeat. I am quite sure no one ever called *her* chicky.

Just the same John must stop this flow of unwarrantable English. "That dude with the yellow stripes on his trousies," he continued, during the course of the meal, indicating a cavalry officer at the next table, "will get a large cup custard for a hat if he doesn't stop laughing at my Italian." At this the "dude" laughed again, which spoke well for his disposition and his education. But some day John will find himself out at cock crow opposite some more fiery Italian, and shooting him with the sprag.

Miss Grey does not approve of John's superabundance of spirit. She said once that it hardly fitted in with the surroundings. I repeated her remark to John, and he replied that he was only an American and there was no use in his trying to look like a triumphal arch, or an olive grove, or a ruined castle on a hill.

At the Urbino luncheon she kept her face buried in her book, emerging only once with a bit of news that she thought might sober the leader of the party.

"Here, Fabius Valeus, a play actor, was put to death," she read, impressively.

"He was probably a prompter," said John, mindful of Gubbio.

"No, he was a comic," replied Miss Grey, with gentle emphasis.

"But that was in '69, A.D.," said the artist. "I've heard of him. He was a captain in the Roman Legions as well."

"It's simplified," flashed Mrs. Baring, "he was

an amateur. No doubt he further irritated the public by organising a dramatic club."

"Had he lived in mediæval times," Douglas Warwick continued seriously, "he would have been protected by the Dukes of Montefeltro. All their line were patrons of the arts, and this ducal palace was the scene of wonderful masques. When Lucretia Borgia passed through here with her cavalcade on the way to her husband in Ferrara, the entertainments equalled any of the Medici pageants. And you can imagine the enormous task of feeding and housing this party when you read that the Duke and his household moved out of the palace that she might occupy it with her suite. The place must have a thousand rooms, at least."

"Where did they go?" asked Miss Grey. "There seems to be no other important edifice about."

"Give it up," said John, venturing an unsolicited reply. "But if the villagers had anything to say about it the family occupied the Birthplace. I've been conducted there three times this morning when I was only wanting grease for the universal joint."

"Ah, you've rheumatism, Ward?" queried the painter, sympathetically.

"No," answered John, controlling his chuckles of delight out of respect to art. "But our car might develop a case, if that part of her vertebræ was not lubricated now and then. Come out and I'll show you how to do it. Great fun, I assure you. Well,

yes, I've read 'Tom Sawyer,' but that was a white-washed fence." And we made ready for the start.

Having feverishly exacted a promise from Mrs. Baring (she didn't know it was a promise, it was an "unavoidable arrangement" with her) not to meet her until Genoa, where she was hurrying to see some friends, I drove John on to Pesaro, John likewise driving me, though on level bits of road he let me do it literally, and I went through the city gates hardly chipping them.

Since Pesaro is on the Adriatic, and fishes for a living, we ate a great deal of the commodity at the Cardinal's palace, where we visited—the Cardinal has been dead some three hundred years and his palace is an hotel—and like all fish of seaport towns it cost us more than we would pay for it in Chicago. But then we could not possibly eat fish in a Cardinal's palace in Chicago, nor receive more ecstatic attention anywhere even if we were (or was) the Cardinal himself. There were footstools in the great dining-hall (with a little gallery for musicians—too cunning), and one was not allowed to eat anything at all until his feet were planted on one of them. Once I let my cramped right foot stray happily around for a minute, but it was discovered and a second stool was brought—a sad reflection on the area of my soles, or "two square feet," as John put it.

We had a beautiful time in Pesaro, although my lovely hills were far behind, Genoa was far ahead,

and I still had every claim on the motor car and John. Strange, my course of reasoning! Once the motor car would not have figured in it, later it was John and motor car, now it appears to be motor car and John. But it was The Thought that came to me in Pesaro that made the level town so beautiful, for it was a beautiful thought, and it all happened through a plate that was just as lovely.

The plate was Urbino ware, not old at all, but bought at the factory established now in Pesaro where the ancient majolica of Faenza, Urbino, and Pesaro (but not the ware of Gubbio, which is a lost art) has been revived. The original plate is in the Museum of Pesaro. Quite the finest collection by the way, in Italy, and having seen it we enjoyed the faithful reproduction and said we'd take it.

John gives me spending money for the trinkets I pick up, and I put my hand in my purse as John put his in his pocket, for it came over me that I would have to buy it all myself—everything from now on that I wanted to go away with me when I left John, and when I saw him eager to pay too I got quite sick around the heart.

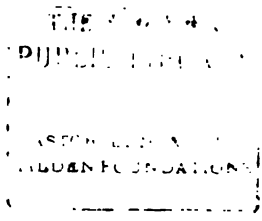
Perhaps it was because I wanted the plate so very much. Anyway I said, "I think I'd like to buy this myself, please," and dear John, who reads faces kindly but seldom rightly, made answer that he had thought of buying it for me as a remembrance, a *ricordo*, as they say prettily here.

"We might have 'when this you see remember me'



RIMINI

"The ancient bridge of Augustus, which leads to the Via Emilia"



scrawled around the edge," he added jocularly, but I didn't smile.

"It would be nice for me to pay half, John," I persisted. I like the thought of John and me sharing as much as we could for as long as we could.

So I paid half, and John half, and we took turns carrying it back, all done up in white tissue paper. "Like a wedding cake," laughed John. And I laughed too, for The Thought came to me. It was a very simple thought, and I know now that it has been floating about all unshaped for a long time; the thought to ask John to let me withdraw my complaint and not have any divorce and to go home far away from all troublesome people—and Mrs. Baring. I hadn't quite the courage yet, though I didn't mind the swallowing of my pride, but it seemed best to wait through a few more pleasant days until the chug-chug of the Dago's engine was not confused in any way with the quiet whirring of our domestic cogs.

And besides I was so happy hugging The Thought.

Chapter XI

THERE was some difficulty in getting away from Pesaro—the Cardinal's bedroom had its attractions, the walls nicely painted with lace draperies and further ornamented by chromos of the Three Graces and several actresses. But it was not the appeal to our comfort that held us, it was a more tangible difficulty in that the porters were serving the Sunday dinner. We had dawdled through our noon meal in the hope that the long table which was set in the middle of the banquet hall might be occupied by Pietro Mascagni and his singing people. There was to be opera that night and it was understood from the chambermaid that Mascagni would move into the Cardinal's bedroom one minute after we moved out.

There were no evidences of his fine pompadour about the dining-room and we no sooner rose to go than the long table was possessed by the landlord, his family, the white capped cook, the waiters, the housemaids, and the small boots. They flocked in through all four doors simultaneously and had probably been watching in agony through the cracks as we poked over our meal. We felt most apologetic, and as the two porters in clean blue blouses served the dinner it was impossible for us to get away for some time without abbreviating the event.

It was a very jolly meal, the porters devouring

their food after each course was served to the others, and chattering with them on perfect equality which greatly relieved me. It would be too bad to have the social line drawn at hickory shirts.

We whisked past an automobile on our way to Rimini, the sixth that we had met on the country roads since landing, and we wondered how long it would be before this beautiful Way of the Consul Flaminius would be known and travelled as are the highroads of France. At Rimini its course was run, ending in a triumphal arch that was erected by Augustus on the eventual completion of the Way. Its character had changed from Urbino, and the sea was our companion from Pesaro on, but its narrow roadbed never failed us. Beyond, from east to west for two hundred miles through the flat north country, lay the broad Via Emilia built in 187, B.C., by the Consul Æmilius, and between our old road and our new was Rimini. Rimini of Francesca and Paolo, Isotta, Sigismondo, and others of the Malatesta. Rimini of hand-organs and cafés and casinos by the sea, Rimini of some squalor, little beauty, and a good hotel waiter.

The waiter has a blonde moustache, and gives advice just as Giuseppe and Paolo of our little Roman hotel always do. His salad dressing appealed to us in the beginning, and our vanity was tickled when he begged pardon, but wished the signor and signora to know how well the Italian guests in the dining-room thought of them.

"When the signor and signora come in they bow to the tables, and when they go out they bow to the tables, and the Italian gentlemen say, 'these are Americans, not English, for Americans observe the customs of our country, therefore they are much loved.'"

From that time on you may be sure that John and I were exchanging profound salutations with anybody whose eye we caught.

When one has seen the Temple dei Malatesta and the Castle that Sigismondo built where poor Francesca was murdered, and until one has crossed the ancient bridge of Augustus, which leads to the Via Emilia—there is very little left of Rimini to "do." Of course there are always an infinite number of things to be done, but that is not the tourist's way of spending his days. There are some suburbs to be explored, historic suburbs, not recent affairs in stained shingles and hard-wood mantels. One is up on a hill, and if you take the long and the wrong road to the other suburb, which is on a peak, you will pass it and the other suburb is La Republica di San Marino.

La Republica di San Marino is a very impressive title, even when it is read out of a book and not cried aloud with the "r's" rolled like a drum corps' salute by the country's messenger. We had quite forgotten that the smallest republic in the world, which the unhappy Robert Robbins had been urged to visit, was perched on its mountain top not fifteen

miles from Rimini, and it was the messenger who reminded us.

He arrived at night driving a wobbly horse in the shafts of a vehicle that was a cross between a school picnic waggon and a Boston herdic. There were trunks on the top, sample trunks, and on the hard picnic seats were two sad-looking drummers with not a joke left in them—they bargain well at San Marino. The streets were quite empty, which seemed to vex the driver, for he cried in a loud voice amidst much whip cracking: "Make way there! Make way for the Messaggiere di la Republica di San Marino!" And he continued his needless exhortations until there was a head at every window, which was his glorious end and aim.

"Hear the eagle scream, Peggy," said John, "we ought to climb up to his eyrie and pay our respects."

"I think," I replied, "that it is our duty as Americans to go, and I know it will please them. I'm not sure but that set bouquets and keys to the city will be our portion. I have a presentiment that way, and I shall wear a pretty hat."

"Well, considering that they snubbed Napoleon I am not looking for a set bouquet or an address of welcome. Still, with a five *lire* piece in one hand and a great desire to spend it in the other, we can probably make the ascent."

"Providing the auto cares for such an Excelsior expedition." I had stopped referring to the motor car as "The Means," as may be noticed.

John turned on me reproachfully. "Care for it!" he exclaimed, "It's as fond of Excelsior as a dollar ninety-eight stuffed sofa. Haven't you heard it upideeing, upidying while making all the ascents? It's really mad at me, because I don't let it have a banner to bear, 'A car who bore 'mid snow and ice a banner with the strange device—' Let me see," he continued, ceasing his sweet song, and going over to the table for a pathfinder. "Yes, here it is, rising precipitately to a height of two thousand, four hundred and twenty feet, with nine thousand, five hundred inhabitants distributed about—two to every foot you see. Two thousand, four hundred and twenty feet straight up from the sea," eating the words. "Great little country, Peggy."

I have noticed of late that John rates the excellence of a locality by its altitude, taking no interest whatever in seacoast towns, and as I find other autoists who are awfully bored with any country that is not as flat as one's hand I infer that the difference of opinion is not from any æsthetic reason, but according to the horse-power of their machines. Though I believe they would all like to like the hill towns best if only they could get there.

Our waiter said we should see San Marino by all means, that the drive by diligence was four hours, but with an automobile "whizz," and he flew his hand up an imaginary incline of forty-five degrees with that childlike faith in the achievement of the impossible which afflicts all Italians. It is a quality

particularly exasperating to the man of modest claims as to the prowess of his car, for they have a stupendous belief founded on ignorance in the ability of a motor, and if you admit that seventy-five miles an hour is a little rapid for your car when scaling the sides of a precipice they look upon you as a poor creature who does not understand the full force of the thing you drive.

Our start was not propitious. The hotel garage was a nook resembling a stair closet, the kind used for brooms, and to get in or out of it John had to back into the small garden at the rear of the hotel with a flower bed in the centre and a well on one side. The only reason we did not go into the well was because we were too large. Our proximity to it alarmed the chambermaid into loud shrieks of expostulation, not through any solicitous fear for us, but because she drew the water for the pitchers from the well by lowering a bucket out of the upper windows, and a large auto lodged in the mouth would necessarily block the easy progress of her duties.

We did go into the flower bed several times, the familiar clamshell border offering very little resistance. The signora shrieked at this, and the duet between the two women filled the windows all around the little open court with as gratifying a crowd as any that the messenger from San Marino had ever mustered. One girl with great presence of mind brought a candle, though the sky was blue, and an old crone who had probably not left her room for

badly, and after some disconcerting m
clamour I must admit that he was—J
been to the Minerva Club.

I have just spoken of the patch of
tween the high houses. I had observed
with satisfaction for the sun had bee
all morning, and had crept into the
déjeuner as though it were a shy
frightened of Americans. "Don't not
notice it," I whispered to John, who, of c
to shake it by the hand in his boister
It came quite close to my chair a litt
breathed with its hot breath upon me.
to throw it a piece of cheese, but I let
precious ice instead as a sop to Cerber
lapped up most eagerly.

We thought after that it would stay
it was an ungrateful creature for as soo
the city gates we saw an ominous mist
mountain top of San M

of red sails, and even when the rain came there were patches of sunlight on the rolling country below. To be strictly truthful the rain did not come to us, we came to it. We saw ourselves doing it and put on our oilskins preparing for the worst.

"*Brutto tempo, signore,*" cried a cheery little farmer as he plodded past on his mule. "Brutal weather, indeed," answered John. "San Marino there?" pointing towards the mist. "*Si, si, signore, mia patria.*" And the republican jogged complacently on.

We were entirely shut in by the mist when we reached what was evidently the highest point in the world, and drew up at a small inn of the village to be welcomed vociferously by two landladies and six landlords. There was an enormous fireplace in the single room on the first floor, and while combined efforts were made to force us into the best parlor, one flight above, we clung to the hearthstone where we poached ourselves like happy eggs completely surrounded by water. For an hour we were there shut off from the rest of humanity in a cloud world, writing on souvenir postal cards and boasting casually of the ascent.

"You see, going up a slippery road to such a height is something worthy of record, Peggy," explained John, "and I can't say that I am the least bit disappointed in the place now that we are here."

"You haven't seen it," I practically corrected.

"No, not all of it, but I expect to. Look out

tainly, for a wall of rock greeted our
rock that rose precipitously from the foo
town and at the top, for there was a t
grim roofs of another village.

"And what is that?" asked John, po
dizzy height with an amazed finger.

"That signor," chorused the two la
the six landlords, "why that is San M.

One of the landlords rode with us, si
step of our motor for the rest of the ei
twenty feet of ascent. We didn't wa
but he said he always accompanied the
gentlemen from the Borgo, which was t
the suburb we had mistaken for the mair
wrapped in the clouds. We were evider
first to be led astray and we now see h
landladies and the six landlords can make
able profit out of their hostelry. It rai
the time, the accompanying landlord ad
it would not rain again that day, he has



SAN MARINO

"The smallest republic in the world. . . .perched upon its mountain top"





streets—with music. "It never rains on the figure of St. Francis," he completed happily.

We did not drive the auto into the square, but turned it around so as to be ready for the descent and left it drawn up at the side of the highway. John said afterwards "something" told him to do it. I reminded him that I was the "something," but he pretended not to hear me. There was very little happening around the Palazzo del Governo, which is perfectly new, though in beautiful Gothic style. Nor could we see either of the presidents. They are chosen in pairs from sixty life members of the body known as the Great Council, which is made up in equal proportions from the ranks of the *noblesse*, the landowners, and the burghers. The presidents or *Capitani Reggenti* only serve a six-months' term, so I didn't grieve over not seeing them as they do not have time to become extraordinary, and I'm not sure whether or not encores are allowed.

I told the guiding landlord that our term of four years was better, and he remarked reflectively that they had been following this rule for nearly three centuries with slight variations and so far there had been no wars and no assassinated presidents, although of course the signora was right.

He was a tiresome landlord, and why the municipal guards should have picked out John and myself for arrest, when that person——! Well, to go on, it was a lovely procession. The sun had come out and the women had hung bright cloths from their windows all

along the narrow ways, while children with their kerchiefs packed full of flowers filled every high nook along the route, ready to shower the blossoms upon the gentle head of dear St. Francis.

First came the music, the government band, then choir boys with tall tapers, then the effigy borne on the shoulders of four men and quite encircled by priests who weren't very nice about the descending flowers, and shook them off their vestments most impatiently. There was one old man in purple silk whom I didn't like at all. He looked a little like Mrs. Baring, although John couldn't see it; still it was most touching, with the simple men and women of the village bringing up the rear all chanting their prayers and quite without the false shame we have when revealing our emotions in public.

I cried hard, but very peaceful in my mind, being comforted by The Thought, and John was so impressed that he wanted to photograph them when the procession wound its way back to take St. Francis into his home once more. In some parts of Italy they are very nice about photographs, one funeral in the South stopping itself voluntarily and a few of the masked Brothers of Misericordia begging for a print; but they were not nice in San Marino, and I laid the blame on the priest in purple silk who looked like Mrs. Baring and had resented the blossoms that fell on his fat shoulders. More than this, he had been unlucky about splashing in the puddles, getting into almost all of them, while the priests inferior to him

hadn't a spot of mud on their fustian robes, and it aggravated him to the point of saying "damn!" Of course he didn't say it, and being denied this natural outlet to his fractiousness he espied his brother and sister republicans on a wall, one with a camera and the other trying to hide it.

I saw immediately that he was going to be furious, and endeavoured to ingratiate him with a killing smile. I didn't stop to think whether it was proper or not, he being a priest, but I'm not sorry I did it. It had no effect upon him, however; for an instant he looked helplessly about, then discovering the usual brace of officers at the church door endeavouring to keep order, he hustled the procession along in the most scandalous way and pointed us out to the guardians of the tupenny-hapenny republic.

As the police turned towards us we turned towards the motor car. It was a concerted action, the difference being that we reached our destination and the guards did not, for the crowd surged up the steps and drove them momentarily back. In that moment John had cranked the engine, the spark caught, and as I pushed the lever from neutral into activity John jumped in and we were off. From behind we heard the cry of the minions of the law and on looking back noticed a sudden desertion from the ranks of the religious procession to aid in the pursuit of the fleeing criminals. Poor St. Francis must have walked into the church unattended, and while never a vindictive martyr it was probably as a punishment for

this neglect that he came to our aid, and put into our minds a way of escape.

The waggon road down the mountain is like a skein of dangling yarn winding back and forth. We had the start of the people however and though the many turns took time our car seemed to be so easily outdistancing them that they were soon out of sight and a minute later out of ear shot. I gave a sigh of relief, but John kept on his rapid course.

"That sudden silence isn't Italian, Peg," he said, "they'll be upon us yet, mind what I say. Why, of course," excitedly, as a new thought struck him, "there must be a short cut for pedestrians, that's what they're making for."

"It's what they've made for," I cried, looking up the mountain side, "and here they come."

So they were. All the religious procession with the police, not priests, at their head this time, yelling like Indians, and tearing down a wide but rough flight of steps that had been hewn out of the rock. In half a minute they would be swarming into the road ahead of us, and at the pace we were going we would either kill half a dozen and add manslaughter to our list of crimes, or have to slacken our speed and take the guardians of peace on their first motor ride *en route* to jail.

John made a mental calculation, kicked the throttle clear open and raised his foot momentarily from the brake, the car seemed to make a mighty jump into the air, and we were past the rugged staircase

with the religious procession still seven steps to do. But there were two more turns in our road, two more zig-zags down the mountain side and therefore two more chances for the populace, rushing down over their short cuts, to forestall us. As we made the first of these turns and twisted back, we saw with no great reckoning that their short cut would bring them to the road ahead of us no matter what burst of speed we made. They would be waiting for us with sticks and stones and a fine republican contempt for aristocrats in motor cars, and it nettled John and me coming as we did from the biggest republic in the world to the littlest, to be so trapped by these picayunes.

We cast about in our minds, but I don't think any inspiration would have come to us had it not been for that good St. Francis who had been obliged to climb up into his niche unaided. Even so, I am sure had he known anything about motor cars he would not have suggested what seemed an impossibility. But full of gentle innocence he whispered to us instantaneously, not the man before the woman, that with the proper show of sporting blood we ourselves might profit by the short cut, this last one, which led from the strand of road that we were on at the time down to the main way leading into the valley. The cut was some fifty feet this side of the one that the mob were descending. It was, as I have said, a broad flight of rough stone steps, the edges worn with ages. To a pedestrian it was a very gentle incline,

to a donkey the king of roads, to a motor a car—hush! John and St. Francis and I talked very little among ourselves, but we were entirely *simpatico.*

"History repeats itself," urged St. Francis.

"General Putnam did," I pleaded.

"Ancestor of mine," breathed John.

And that settled it. St. Francis went back to his niche while I sat tight, and old Put's relative jammed down the break, did sudden things toward the left with his steering wheel, and drove us bumpty-bump over the ancient trail. A yell of astonishment from the religious procession rent the air, a yell of triumph from John went back to them, a sharp snap came from a little black box which I held in my hands, and we bounded out of the military zone of La Republica di San Marino.

"Was that the click of a gun?" demanded John, eyes straining over the wheel.

"No," I replied, as I put my best hat on straight. "that was I photographing the policemen."

An hour later John was tenderly rubbing down his sweating engine while I sponged the faithful tires, and fed the tanks several gallons of high proof gasoline.

"What was that you remarked about set bouquets, and the key of the city, Peg?" said John, his teeth clinched on a cigar.

"I made a mistake," I replied, "the bouquets were for St. Francis, but the keys of the city were offered us—and declined."

"'Sweet land of liberty,'" sung John softly, "It was the mud on the purple silk robe of the priest that caused all the trouble," he added. And then, very meanly: "How like a woman!"

"Well, I told you he looked like Mrs. Baring," I retaliated, sponging tires madly.

John rose to her defense, smouldering but futile.

"Margaret Ward, you shouldn't say that about a good woman, and you shouldn't say that about a —a——" he gasped for a word.

"Bad woman?" I completed, but it was not a happy finish.

"No, I was going to say about a friend of mine, if not of yours." And my own husband threw his cigar upon the stones, flattened it under his heel and went into the hotel.

I went on sponging dully. It is so hard to save a man's soul gently when he needs slapping. One might infer he didn't want it saved. One might infer—I sat right down and mopped my brow with the wet carriage sponge. Why, what if John thoughtlessly thinks that The Thought which I have so thoughtfully thunk—thinked—thanked—oh, my gracious me! A doubtful heart knows nothing of the parts of speech.

Chapter XII

I BEGGED John's pardon before we left Rimini. At least I said, "I am very sorry, dear, that you are so annoyed over this affair of the resemblance and I shall never remind you again, never again, John, that the priest *did* look like Mrs. Baring."

Then John laughed as he once did at my stories of the Minerva Club, and we slid over the bridge of Augustus into the Via Emilia. He was straightway wrapped in the automobile aura that smells of gasoline, although otherwise quite spiritual, and had no idea just what that apology meant to me or how I felt over it. But I was full of musings, my principal muse being that John and I were changing places. A month ago he would have asked my pardon for stamping on his cigar and I would have reflected before gratifying it. Now I ask his pardon for his stamping on it, and keep the flattened end as a *ricordo.* And sometimes at table it comes over me that I am sitting in John's chair and he in mine, only the table being circular we have crawled around so slowly that we are scarcely conscious of the exchange. And now that John is in my chair it has become a throne!

These thoughts carried me clear up to the Rubicon which was a thin stream and as John says a "cinch" for Cæsar or any other shortlegged man to wade

through. Moreover that Washington crossing the Delaware could give him cards, spades, and his long cape over his left shoulder and come out ahead in any front parlour steel engraving in America. John is so United Status—an excellent fault. On the Via Emelia it takes an alert American or sleeping Italian to make his way safely over the broad highways. The two work well together, for the American is sure that the sleeping driver will continue to occupy the middle of the road and he goes to the extreme right without remonstrance. But the North Italian who is awake is very apt to block the path of the stranger, fearless for his own conveyance, for he knows the rare abilities of a swift motor, and the swift motor swerves violently but speeds on, swearing vengeance on the next carter.

It is not pleasing to us, but the North Italian calls himself Americanised, also he is of a province that breathes autos, some of them speeding devil engines that find the flat way of the Emelia too great a temptation to resist, and he oils his number, this man from Turin, that the dust may stick and obscure it, jams open the throttle, and makes himself unpopular in the street. John sympathises with the motorist and doesn't care at all for the spirit of Uncle Sam ebullient from a donkey cart.

There are some changes in John's character that seem to have developed with the assuming of leather cap and leggings, and these changes are apart from his newly acquired authoritativeness over me. In the

first place, his memory is bad. He has forgotten the day he drove a skittish horse and had to get out twenty-three times on the New Jersey pike and hide the animal's head in the lap robe whenever an auto bounced past. He has even forgotten what he said to the man who didn't slow down when he held up his hand; no matter how closely I press the point he can recollect only that he called the person "rude." In these days, while John is very sensitive to upraised arms and obeys promptly as good roadsters should, he contends that a skittish horse has no right on the highway, nor slow oxen, nor stupid donkeys, nor large waggons, nor hand carts, for that matter, and of course not silly, light affairs that can be crushed so easily. There is very little left of the road when John cuts through with it excepting the macadam and John himself.

Then, too, he has developed in this country of elegant leisure a desire to "get on" that should make his fortune in America if rightly applied. He began quite temperately with our day's run. If the village was pleasant there would we rest, even though the distance was only thirty miles; now there are no "pleasant" villages at the end of a thirty mile run. They may be fine places for luncheon, or for gasoline, or for oiling the steering gear, but the "pleasant" place is always ninety to a hundred miles away. Just as heights were to John fine things to climb to (the elevation of the machine and not the spirit was the idea with him) so are towns—distant towns—fine



FORLI

"Approaching the town along a wonderful poplar-sentinelled avenue"

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things to get to. And that is the way we got to Bologna.

We stopped at Forli for luncheon, approaching the town along a wonderful poplar-sentinelled avenue. Not the kind of western poplar that sheds its leaves all over a little girl's front walk so that she must sweep it off for mother twice a day. Not that kind at all, but a tall graceful creature that is very neat with its leaves and never wanders from its own fireside. A north Italian poplar would no more visit the cypress down in the central belt than would a stone pine, umbrella over head, come up from the south to take root, or leave needles even, on the land of either of her two shapely sisters. No, a stone pine may be more "shady," but she does not gad about.

At Forli we took our meal on the balcony of an ancient palace. We refuse to eat in any habitation nowadays that hasn't a stone coat of arms over the door. There had been a tent show of some sort in the square the night before and we were very bitter over having missed it. There was no top to the thing. It was all sides, and we could easily have remained in our palace and witnessed the performance, which John thought would have been almost as joyful as crawling under the canvas when the circus hands weren't looking.

It had not been a very good circus the waiter said, the weather had been "*brutto*" and it was still fairly so. I bought a lovely postal card of Forli which John discovered me sending to our friends. It was

a sort of a man angel hovering over the town with a huge umbrella in his hand, a very wet sort of a picture, and I had written "St. Francis protecting the Wards' motor car from showers while passing through Forli," but John said he thought it rather stupid, it gave no proper idea of the town, he added, almost petulantly, and besides a canopy obscures the view. So I tore it up. Did you notice that? I *tore* it *up*.

The way of the Emelia lay through the land of potteries. Although Faenza, which we passed, has not revived its old art of faïence, there were abundant evidences in the shrines set in the houses that the people knew majolica when they saw it. The gateways (two square pillars with a slanting roof overhead, very Chinesy in appearance) that led to the farmlands all bore these little placques on the left side, right over their hearts. Sometimes it was Mary with the baby, sometimes little Christus alone, and sometimes, on expensive gateways, the whole family in lovely colours, softened by time and exposure. It was most impressive and chastened as I was by John's erratic soul I felt more religious than I had for many years and just longed to steal one of them as a souvenir of this awakening. But they were too high up.

I had decided to tell John of The Thought of Pesaro when we reached Bologna, the doubt of Rimini which had entered my heart as to his ready acceptance of the offer to go home by Genoa had spread. It was in my lungs now, making it hard to

breathe, so that I yawned as if bored, although I wasn't. Later it got into my brain too, and kept pounding away with endless repetitions of "have it over, have it over," like a door banging again and again, driven by the wind.

Everything pointed to the telling in Bologna. The minute we saw the two towers, like lovely waterworks slightly out of plumb, we knew we would like the place. It's easy to do a hard thing if the environment is pleasant, and by the time we were established in our hotel we were so comfortable that almost anything seemed as though it would be easy, and right within our grasp. But that was before we tried to buy pyjamas. Tracing my heart-breaking disappointment back step by step I lay the whole trouble at the shopping for the pyjamas, for that led directly to the door of the inn of the Five Cucumbers and—well!

Bologna as a city is all right. It's just the proper combination of old world outside and new world inside to cause one to wonder why travellers who wish to feed the eye and the body at the same time do not make it the *pièce de résistance* of all Italy. That's the way we feel about Bologna. Everything is there that we could wish for except manners (it is Americanised) and pyjamas. There are wonderful churches, and open air tombs on stilts, and towers weak in the spine, cavalry officers and college students (very simple as to trouserings but possibly studious); there are toothsome sweetmeats, Raphael's

Cecilia, and even sausages. I did not expect the last. It is so hard to get cheese at Edam and beef in Texas, but we found it better than the genuine "bologny" at our butcher's back in the States. Indeed, everything was better except manners, which were just the same, and of course pyjamas.

John is willing to eat his hat if anyone can put pyjamas into Italian. His way of demanding them was peculiar, even cautious. One would think by his old-sleuth methods of tracking them down that he intended to spring upon the garments unawares, handcuff them to his person, and drag them shrieking from their hiding place. He would begin by exclaiming "*brutto tempo*" to the man who met us at the door. One is always met at the door in Italy, no matter what the character of the interior. If the Italian dictionary does not define a door as an aperture for meeting people it is not truly Johnsonian.

After the amenities had been exchanged, John asked for the "shirt of the day" counter. He didn't want a shirt of the day, but he knew the Italian for it, and at least it was an individual counter which was nearer his quest than the door. Upon arriving if he found that the clerk was a woman he looked at her stock of shirts and didn't like the cuffs. John will not buy underwear of a girl even in Italian. It embarrasses him, and he walks off with youth's size pretending that he has a son.

If the right kind of biped was in attendance he then became scornful of shirts of the day, and immed-

iately went to sleep standing in the aisle with his head pillowed on his hands. One can do these things in Italy and not necessarily ride in a patrol waggon, for at once he was understood, and showers of night shirts descended upon him—abbreviated garments reaching only to the hips after the fashion of the country. At this John became deeper and deeper for he would wear none of their wares, but dashed about in a seemingly distracted state, picking out various bits of colour in pale blue and pink, then pointing to the trousers and coat he was wearing and ending his silent peroration with the wild prehistoric cry: "pyjamas!"

Although we visited many of the shops, John received no encouragement to remain after his fierce plea once rent the air, excepting in the case of a certain needy proprietor who thought himself Americanised, and guaranteed to make a suit of clothes exactly like John's own in pink broadcloth—not charging for the vest.

The obliging proprietor was our last straw, and it was at this point that we staggered into the inn of the Five Cucumbers for *déjeuner*. We need not have gone there; in the same narrow thoroughfare were the Four Pilgrims, the Three Kings, and the Two Towers, all eager to wait upon us, but in the hopes of meeting a live cucumber and being served by one of the genus we entered the restaurant. John said afterwards that "something" made him go in. It is always on John's side, this "something." It

didn't tell me to keep out, and in consequence I was kissing Mrs. Baring and Miss Grey. John was shaking hands with the Douglas Warwick, and all of us were exclaiming at the change of plans that brought us together once more. But we were differently affected. John and Mrs. Baring wore shining faces, while I dared not lean over fearing that the tears would drop out of my eyes.

I knew that Bologna with all its comforts and its beauty would not be the place for the development of The Thought so long as John wore that shining face, that simple face, that expressed no incredulity whatever when Mrs. Baring juggled with the story of vanishing friends and a delayed steamer.

"If the boat has not yet touched Naples how can it be in Genoa to-day?" she queried, flashing. "So we stayed on here, hoping for a glimpse of you, you two." But she looked at John, while the Douglas Warwick looked at her, and Miss Grey and I looked at one another. In an instant I saw that there was pain in Miss Grey's eyes. I am quicker in detecting pain than I was once, and my hand went out to Miss Grey's hand under the shelter of the table cloth.

"It is foolish, I know," whispered Miss Grey, struggling with thirty years' repression, "but I am not the factor that I have been in her life, and I do feel so alone."

"You see it too?" I whispered back, and strove to hide the horror in my face.

"My dear, we are both women," Miss Grey an-

swered. And we clutched hands again in passionate sympathy.

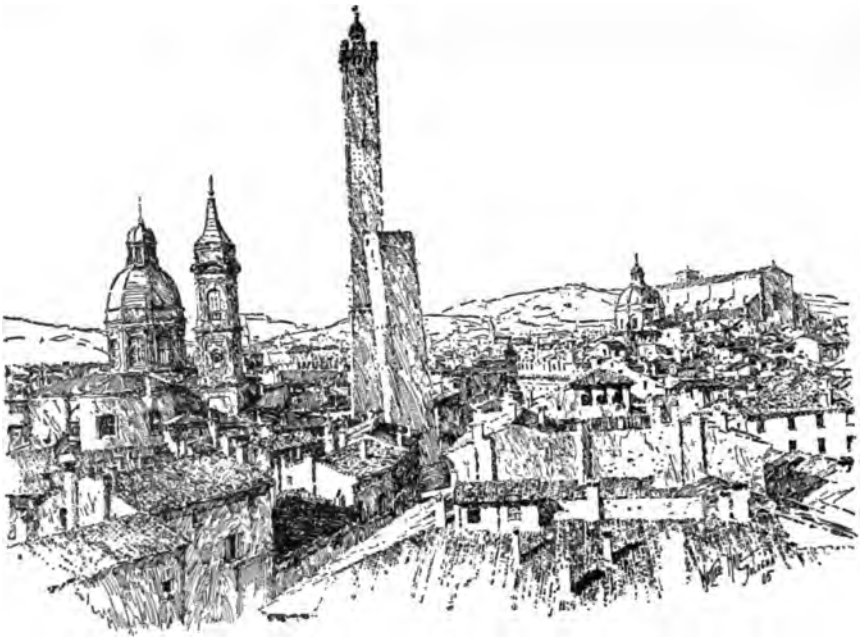
In the face of this added shame occasioned by the realisation that others had seen what my vanity had been so slow in recognising, my nerve temporarily forsook me. I felt myself afraid of myself, not because of any lack of faith in my fine purpose, nor that my chastened spirit shone the less resplendently in this crisis, but, grimly ridiculous thought! simply that my nose after all turned up and that I did not look my best in brown. I hope that no one else will ever be harassed during a real heartbreaking experience by the belief that she would have won the day had her hair been Marcel-waved. If my heart has got to go on breaking I want at least the solace of great thoughts. My brain at present feels like a department store, and a trading stamp place, at that, dusty but busy.

We are in Piacenza now. It happened here, the unfolding of The Thought—and the frost. Ever since the encounter in the Five Cucumbers any soul-saving project of mine would have been unseasonable. But the door kept banging in my mind with the cry "have it over—have it over." And so I did, and so it is.

There was moonlight, and there had been a heavenly drive from nine until midnight along the wide white road, the vast fertile gardens of the plain on either side sending up sweet homey odours of hay and wild rose, and wonderful nightingales in the hedges

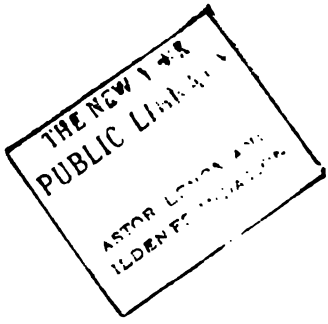
singing me good luck as we swept past. I never realised before what a motorist I had become, enjoying as I did this broad way that led to destruction. There seemed two of me. One was in a covert coat exulting in the steady throbbing of the engine, the swift rush through the night, the dangerous twists as we made way for sleeping drivers, the power, the mightiness of this unruly beast which John controlled. The other me was a sick little thing afraid of the road, of the distant obstacles looming up before us that ceased to be distant as instantly as we saw them; of John, of herself, of what must be said when the run was over. And yet the two went on through the night, snuffing in the air, sometimes singing together, their voices in perfect harmony, sometimes calling a greeting to the patrons of a wayside *caffè* who rose to look, lunged forward to answer, and stood in the silent streets watching the gleam of our rear light as we winked past them.

When we came upon the larger towns, Modena, Reggio, Parma, many towered, glistening in the white light, we were halted momentarily by the city gates, one sleepy custom officer making a poor show of examining our luggage, while his brother in the business swung open the iron barriers. At Parma John shouted awake a vendor of gasoline, and filled up the tank while the me in the covert coat scurried hastily about the town for a flask of the real Parma violets. She came back without them, and at the *farmacia* they may be still discussing the oddity of her de-



BOLOGNA

"The two towers, like lovely water works slightly out of plumb"


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mand. Then on we went into the sweet, singing moonlight.

It was John, after all who opened the subject, aided by the proprietor of the San Marco, who had so modernised his hostelry as to build a horror of a cosy corner in my huge room hoping to gladden the eye of the chance American. I had not expected it to happen that way, but when John exclaimed with a good deal of sentiment that this was more like home than any room he had entered for weeks, sighing, I did not remind him that the crazy draperies had never in any way filled a corner of our lives; instead I went to him quite gently and whispered in his ear. He was only puzzled and thought he hadn't heard aright. I spoke aloud then, standing up before him, and very careful about the cracks in my voice.

"Yes, John, you have heard it straight, I do. I want to go home. It calls to me. All through the night there has been a crying in my heart for home. And I must tell you, John; just as I told you when I wanted to go away, now I must tell you when I want to go back. We've had a nice trip, dear, but it has been a long time away and—it's very cool at home in August, John."

I stopped for breath, I might have saved it, he misunderstood. "You'll be all right in the morning, child, you must take my room, it's the cosy corner that's upset you." Again the ludicrous! But I seized his arm with both my hands and talked on rapidly.

"No, John, it's not the cosy corner, they get full of dust, I never liked them. It's something else you don't quite seem to realise. You don't quite seem to appreciate just what I am offering you. We'll go home by Genoa on that boat, and that John, dear, will be the end of all this foolishness. That's what it is. You see, dear John, my eyes are opened. Say you are happy, John, please say it."

He looked at me curiously, and when he spoke it was in his office voice. "And so you're backing out. And why? Just tell me that. And why?"

"This is the better way, the tires don't last forever, and we've accomplished quite enough. We've learned a great deal, John."

He shook me off. "Accomplished!" was that John's voice, not hot, but cold with anger. "We've accomplished nothing. We are half way through this stunt, we've everything our way. Our plans worked splendidly, yet here you are, right on the edge of Italy, crying like a quitter to give it up. I tell you I'll not do it."

I stood petrified by the thing I had feared, but for which I was not at all prepared. How largely is the element of hope a part of woman! "John, you must be careful. You surely do not urge that we go on when I, I, your wife, would give it up. Think, John, think."

"I don't need to think," John retorted, walking up and down. "I tell you I want to go on, and do what we have undertaken. It may be for weal and it

may be for woe, but you and I will take the chances per agreement."

I followed him. We were going about in circles. "You command me," I cried out.

"I do," he flung back.

I fell into our nation's stigma, the cosy corner, and he stood over me with his anger once more under control talking persuasively.

"It's the best thing that ever happened to us yet, why stop it now? It's making a woman of you and a manlier man of me."

My eyes flashed and he resented it.

"There is a kind of people," he continued slowly, "who go about projecting plans and weakly withdrawing them. We have a name for them back in America. Nobody likes it, nobody would be it, nor have a wife, not even a wife, a short sport."

I rose right up out of the cosy corner. It was a mighty moment. "John Ward, go on to Paris, but I think you'll find in the years to come that a taller wife can be a shorter sport."

John gave no sign of comprehension. He scarcely heeded. He had won his point.

Chapter XIII

JOHN bears no malice—when he has his way. He even makes excuses for my shortcomings, and let me sleep into the morning blaming himself for the long run which wore upon my nerves. He never knew how little that wild ride had caused my lapsing into lazy hours. Nobody knew in all the Albergo San Marco but myself and the night watchman.

One may judge how very *art nouveau* the San Marco had become when an all-night waiter was introduced along with the innovations in twisted electroliers and ash trays made out of curving ladies. I had not expected the waiter. It is quite bad enough to steal through the empty stone corridors of an hotel in a kimono over your nightie with only space staring at you and making hideous faces where your bedroom candle throws no gleam. But to be confronted right in the door of your destination—the reading room—by a sleepy man in shirt sleeves who, "always the politeness," struggled into his coat at your approach (although you yourself had nothing at all to struggle into), and—well, such a turn of affairs is altogether too nerve racking, especially when you love your husband, and yet are fleeing from him with a breaking heart.

All those things happened to me after I had put down in my book of inner thoughts the dreadful do-

ings of the night, and John was coughing away in the next room—he says he coughs, not snores. First the resolve had come to me after some tears, much fierce indignation, and fine speeches, both to John and to Mrs. Baring. Oh, had they but been present! It was not a crazy resolve or a hasty one, but a very simply formed desire to take the boat from Genoa and to take it quite alone. I didn't mean by that to charter it, but to go without John and without clothes, shorn of my husband and my vanity, home to work.

Everything was planned systematically. Nothing was done without reason. The midnight prowl to the reading-room, half clad, was emblematic of my final leave taking. The sleeping watchman roused to unusual activity represented but the first of the obstacles that I would have to overcome. This was mastered by a bribe, or the promise of one. I never have my purse when wearing a kimono, but he understood.

"Silence is all I ask of you," I told him, "please hold the candle and get the key to the reading-room door."

He did delightedly. He hoped it was going to be an intrigue and asked if he should light the upper hall. I was very stern with him then, and he brought the papers, the ones from Genoa, later found the column for me, and eventually explained what boats were departing and what ones coming in. When he named the outward bound ones he ran away from me,

and for those that were entering port he bounded back. He was enjoying my clandestine meeting with the newspapers much more than I was, for it is not easy to get the sailings straight, and when I thought how John had always done this for me the tears rushed down like a tidal wave all over the *North German Lloyd* and blinded me, so that the watchman waiter had to tell the *gentilissima signora* after all that this day which was dawning being Monday she could so easily get the boat of Thursday the *Königin Luise*, and sail away from sorrow.

At this gentle prodding for the truth on the part of the romantic waiter I was again severe with him, and yet again was forced humbly to beg his silence.

Intrigue has its price. He obeyed me to the letter, but in the hope of further developments dogged my footsteps all the morning, and when my fascinated eyes met his he would roll his own, drop the left lid and slyly lay a finger on his lips. John almost caught him as he was bringing in my breakfast, did so, in fact. The wink was too far on the droop to be withdrawn, but with rare presence of mind he worked the other boldly and continued doing so, first the right and then the left like a poor, nervous, twitching wretch, instead of the night errand that he was. His interest in my welfare hastened our departure. I myself would have stayed on a day in this quaint town with its beautiful churches which no one knows, but in fear that I might miss the

Königin Luise he dwelt upon the dangers of the mountains, the suddenness of the turns, the overhanging rocks, until John who would rather face a danger than eat a lobster grew frantic to press on.

John and I were not bad friends. He was all gentleness, cloaking his satisfaction at the divorcing of me with extra touches of compassion. I, more in sorrow than in anger, accepted what he offered me, sure that my sweetness would leave a deeper memory and a bitterer one when he was free. When *he* was free! Oh, heaven! Always in my thoughts it has been I who would enjoy that blessing. I had not dreamed that John would prize the privilege also, and now he fights for it, fights for one moment of grass widowerhood, that in the next he may be bound again. Prometheus bound! Was it a vulture that did claw him then, or was it a giraffe?

(Note: I find at times when overmastered by emotion a tendency to blank verse. I regret that the humiliating cause of these metrics prevents their repetition to the Minerva Club.)

Anyway, we left at noon, rolling out from a real garage, part of the real hotel, our tank full of gasoline, and more in a *demijohna*, ready for a hundred mile drive, over the Apennines once more, to Genoa. The watchman waiter ran beside us to point out the road, and my last look over my shoulder embraced a vision of the creature making mad gestures indicating silence.

We had chosen a route that took us immediately

into the Apennines away from the railway and from all towns of importance until Genoa was reached. We may have taken this because it was a road of many difficulties; nothing suits John now but the worst, and I must say that he got it. I should have looked upon the actions of the car as a punishment to him had I not suffered also. No one likes to climb a chain of mountains with an engine going like a natural gas well, roaring terribly, then thumping and bucking and going through a number of its baby tricks which we had thought forgotten. John would cry nothing but "all was so lovely yesterday," like an impassioned lover, and I was equally distracted.

"I suppose, John," I inquired cautiously, "we'll get to Genoa to-morrow." That would give me all day Wednesday, I reasoned, to convince John I was going to leave him, and to go on board Thursday alone in the world. It was a perfectly natural question under the circumstances, but John, not understanding, thought I was growing sarcastic, and quite bellowed at me. When things go wrong with the car John doesn't like to have me ask questions. He gets particularly furious if I say to him "what's the matter with it?" And of course, anxious to get on as I was, I repeated the query several times. He ought to take it as a compliment, it shows my perfect faith in him, but he doesn't. "Margaret Ward," he shouted, when I had asked him what was the matter with it for the third time, "if I knew what was the matter with this car I'd fix it. You and

Douglas Warwick would make a good pair. What you two need is a little gold motor car built in heaven with the angel Gabriel as engineer."

You see he was trying to pair me off with Douglas Warwick already, but I never let on. I just said, "you're mixed in your angels. Gabriel will be my tiger and blow his horn, but I'll have Satan for chauffeur."

John sneered at my wit. "So you think Satan could run motor cars better than I can, do you?"

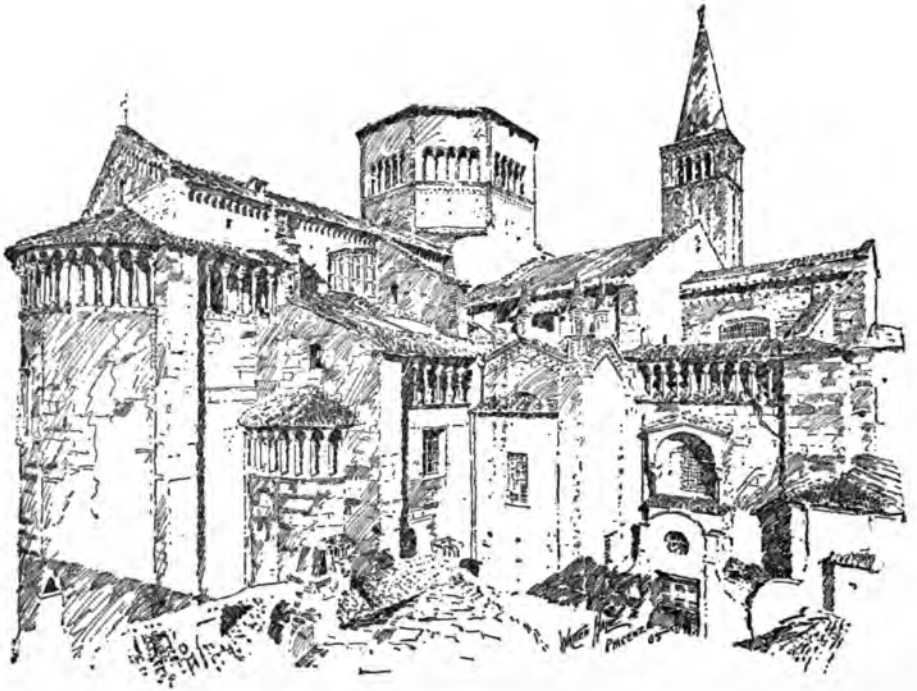
"He ought to—he made 'em," I replied. This was clever, but did not clear the air. He started to give me a lecture on my lack of appreciation of the delicate construction of an engine, and paid ours some very high-flown compliments hoping it would be flattered into moving more evenly, but it was perfectly indifferent to his wiles and went puttering up the mountain side, as though my entire future did not lie in its hands, or perhaps I should say cogs.

It was a lovely mountain too, though not at all Italian except for the fine roadbed and the pink stucco houses now and then. The foliage and the character of the country were like the hills of Oregon. I had to keep saluting all the countrymen and hear their good "*buon' giorno*" to assure me where I was. So in this fashion we bobbed on to Bobbio and stayed for lunch. That Bobbio luncheon, and the waiter who served it, and the landlord who charged for it, and the landlady who cooked it I never wish to see again. They were stolid people of the north. They

were, even in Bobbio, Americanised. They did not call the omelette when referring to it "half a *lira*" nor apostrophise the wine as "forty cents," but they thought in silver currency, and would have murdered us for gold pieces had not the *carabinieri*, the police, lived practically in their back yard.

They were good people to get away from, even to crawl away from and crawl we did, for the tinkering in the courtyard of the knavish landlord (thirty cents) did little to pacify the growling of our car. Then came some six miles of wonderful upgrade road, a road that would make the turning of the letter "s" look like a telegraph pole by contrast. With all our difficulties John managed beautifully, saving the engine on every slight descent, and filling me with a chaos of delight and misery. Well, there is one thought to comfort me, when he and that large woman drive together she'll have no chance to exercise her skill. I could just see them racing for the driver's seat, and criticising one another's steering. How they will fight!

I was almost in a glow of humour over the prospect when the car stopped, not a stop that would suggest a going on after a fresh breath, but a dead stop. The kind of stop that never happens until the sun is setting and one is miles away from everywhere. We had twisted ourselves up the mountain to a great height, almost to the summit, and were in a solitude of woods; three miles back lay a wayside drinking place for the peasant people, an *osteria*,



PIACENZA
"This quaint town with its beautiful churches which no one knows"

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that was all except our new friend Thirteen-thirteen. He was the oldest inhabitant, not only of that locality but of any other. He didn't care at all whether his shirt was closed or open, which is the indifference of the very young or aged, and he chewed tobacco. Had he kept it to himself we would not have minded, but he did not. He was not a gentleman, yet apart from this anomalism of tobacco chewing in Italy we knew he was no common bird of prey, and when we looked at our poor broken car's odometer we read his name, it was 1313, and our Evil Genius.

He sat up on the broken wall at first and chirped, ending his lay by a trembling outstretched claw and the pointing to his lips, the plaint of all Italian beggars.

"For two cents, Mr. Thirteen-thirteen," responded John to his plea, "I'd push you over that wall into the valley below."

"Macaroni," cheeped Mr. Thirteen-thirteen.

"Yes, by George, I'll do it, and hang over to hear you squash."

"John, please," I cried, alarmed at his fascinated contemplation of the balancing Genie.

"No?" he asked, turning to me. "It's all for you, dear, we can't stand a double thirteen in miles and man both. One or the other has to go, if we expect to."

"If we turned off the power, John, and coasted down hill backwards for a while that would take some

of the miles off, wouldn't it? Then we might make a fresh start."

"Very clever," said John, approvingly, but with an acid sweetness, "and when we get up the hill again and reach 1313 in the distance where will that Evil Genius be but right where he is now? And then where will we be but——"

"Right where we are now," I disconsolately completed.

"But don't lose heart," continued John, "you can't take off a mile, odometers weren't built for that placid kind of motoring. It's quite the other way with them. We'll only put some on, so after all the idea is a good one. Besides," and he looked gloomily down the valley to the small house fading in the gathering dust, "I guess the *osteria* through the night for us."

John's idea was to push the car with the engine turned off along the bit of comparatively level going which we had so striven to reach, until the sharper descent began, then jump in, and by looking over the shoulder guide the motor down the three miles of twisted road. I was forbidden to help, my part was to have been at the brake, in case—well, in case —but I was destined for a grapple with the Genie, that whimsical old gent who wished to work.

No sooner did he discover John with shoulder against the hood, pushing back his car, than he hopped from off his perch and with the strength of a gnat endeavoured to oppose him by pushing for-

ward at the rear. There was not much left in the old man's mind that was not addled, but he knew when the wrong end of a motor car was going forward, and he strove for peace and order.

"Get out of the way," roared John.

"Thirteen-thirteen, you will be killed," I urged, hastily descending. But exhortations were lost upon him; between cheeps of "*macaroni*" and "*io fame*," he laid his trembling hands upon the baggage and strained his face like a Samson lifting mighty weights.

"Shoo!" I cried.

"Scat!" screamed John, weak with laughter. Yet the car was beginning to descend, and still Casabianca stuck to his post. In a wave of fear that the wheels might be upon him I gathered up our Evil Genius around his skinny waist, and jounced him down in the roadside, where he sat, spent and quite bewildered. And when I flashed a four cent piece, for him if he wouldn't work, he straightway became a member of the idle rich and patronised us.

Coasting backwards down a tortuous grade in semi-darkness has all the pleasant characteristics of a Welsh rarebit nightmare. We very nearly picked up the mailcoach going through from Genoa to Piacenza, adding it to our baggage in the rear, but it escaped us by an inch. It was a thrilling moment as we backed past, but the peasants inside wore only an exasperated air, as though this last whim of the travelling rich was too much for their patience.

We did not want them decorating our trunk any more than did they, for it was the present weight at the back that was hastening our arrival at the *osteria.* I heroically contemplated at one time leaning over and heaving our ballast to the winds like an aeronaut. Could I have thrown out John's effects and kept mine I would have done it in a minute, but there was no time to divide them, and before I could dispose of the rear lamp we were in the open stable of the pink inn.

There was the usual ragged crowd in attendance, and there was the enormous fireplace in the single room, the hens, the cats, the dogs, the wine of the country with "*salute*" all round before we drank. Then amid the ducking of heads and responses to our toast came the soft voice of an English-speaking *ragazza.*

"What is the matter?" said the girl, stepping out of the crowd. They made way, and watched us proudly, keen for our exclamations of delight. We nobly rose, John shaking hands with her as though she were a long-lost sister, or even a mechanician, while I begged for the story of her life.

It was very simple, six years of Hoboken and back again to visit. Already she had lingered two years, for her parents were old, but she was not happy. "The Apennines are pretty but not like Jersey." She had a beau in Hoboken, then too our language, it was leaving her—that was her great regret.

"There is nothing left," she said, in her sweet

voice, "one day I forget dog, the next day I forget horse. I must go back, Oh, Dio! I must go back. These people here they think that I stay always, but for me, signora—nit!"

It was a little sudden, but it brought us back to earth, John positively asserting that her vocabulary had still the flavour of New York. She became our interpreter and adviser, and the result of her advice was Bobbio. I struggled against it, and the waiter, and the landlord of the silvered speech, but the pink *osteria* which had fathered her was not for us. So quality was bundled into a springless victoria. A bag of oats was added as fodder, either for us or for the horse, it never developed which, and a minute boy of ten climbed to the box.

The landlord's face looked like three dollars when we made our reappearance in Bobbio. Had not the dollars borne the stamp of surprise I should have accused him of direct collusion with the tobacco chewer of the mountain peak, but he had evidently not counted on us, and the agility with which he put us into eighty cents or rather a four *lire* room was only exceeded by our agility in getting there. We had a council ere our five cents (*i.e.* candles) were extinguished, not one of war, as on the night before, but one of things to do. John unfolded and my train of thought ran parallel with his. I wondered curiously as John saw me propped up against the pillows, my face glowing, how he would shape his plans could he know mine. Would he plan for me as I was plan-

ning to catch that boat at Genoa? Would he do it gladly? John was smoking his pipe, talking between whiffs, I was thinking in parentheses.

"The thing to do is to make Genoa by Tuesday night, that is to-morrow," John puffed.

(That gives me then a day of grace, I thought.)

"There is just one way to do it, but it is hard on you."

(Not half so hard as you have been.)

"I must leave you and you'll be lonely."

(I have been lonelier oftener in greater crowds.)

"I'll take the coach for Piacenza. It leaves at 3 A. M., and get a mechanician. A breakdown forty miles from railroad or a mechanic, by Jove! it's tough."

(And sixty miles from Genoa.)

"We'll be back by early afternoon. We'll get a good swift horse and take you on."

(On to our parting, John.)

"When the repair is made we'll have another try. It won't be dangerous going, there ought to be a big white moon."

(There is going to be a big white boat.)

"And when we get to Genoa we'll have a breakfast. You and old Warwick and Mrs. Baring."

(She'll hyphenate the names, I know she will. Ward won't be good enough for her.)

"And if we miss her, and, by George! we may, she took a simpler route, then we'll press on to Nice."

(It's my heart you're pressing on, John Ward, my heart.)

John knocked the ashes from his pipe, and went at his puttee straps, but I continued with my reasoning.

(You are in haste to get away to the woman you love, John, and I am in haste to get away from the man I love—John. And the fever in your blood catches my boat. It'll be you that can get the divorce now, "desertion" the Minerva Club will cry, and "fine mentality," they'll say again, but I don't care now what they'll say. I'd like to knife them all for forcing me to this. They started it, they and that Meredith with his ten years' clause. A nice way for a married man to talk, I'll bet he's been quite happy all his life. And now he's getting old in years and says all these clever things to shake us up, and rattle us. A big mind should be careful what it says, some of the little minds don't get things straight, and always there's a Mrs. Baring hanging round waiting for a wife's misunderstanding. Why, he's a smarty, that's just what he is. Yes, a smarty, and a wrecker of homes, a wrecker of homes—breaking up my flat like this.)

John kicked his leggings off and turned to me. I tried to hide my face, but he caught my hands and whistled wondrously. "Why, how your eyes shine, Peggy. I never saw you look so well. What happy thoughts are in your little head?"

I stared at him. "John Ward, do I look happy?"

"Radiant."

"Then go to bed. My future is mapped out for me."

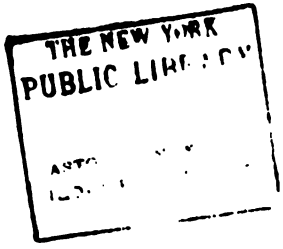
And all night long I dreamed of footlights on a big white boat.

On Tuesday morning an hour before the dawn John left me with a kiss upon my lips. Before the day was over it seemed the kiss of Judas. On Tuesday noon I packed my bag and waited for his coming. Wednesday night came and I was waiting still. One thousand years in Bobbio, but after Bobbio what? I had just two dollars in my purse, ten *lire*, and the landlord wore a "V" expression every time I looked at him. I think the signora was a little sorry and a little proud. Not every inn keeper has a deserted wife to point out to her friends. The friends dropped in to call and watched the wife as she herself watched the road, and made poor calculations in her mind as to the value of a ruby ring in Bobbio, and wondered if the steerage would be so very dreadful.

We had gone over all our plans before John left, and all seemed so simple that Bobbio, up till Tuesday afternoon, was quite a pleasant place. Who would have ever thought to look at Bobbio, that a saint, a rival of St. Benedict, would have chosen it for life. But he was driven to it. It was his fatal beauty that caused his exile from all joyous places. There seemed to be no place where he could hide himself, this Colombo, so that the women would not seek him out and pester him, but Bobbio. He had



SAVONA
"Savona was a town of factories and wharfs"


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tried bear caves, the bears themselves gave up their homes at his appearance, for he made just as great a hit with animals, but always some wise lady of that seventh century would trace him to his lair and smoke him out. The fear of bears was nothing to these women, but they drew the line at Bobbio.

It was late afternoon when I went to see the abbey that Colombo built, not that I was wild about Colombo, but thought a picture of him that would suggest his lineaments would be a slight diversion. I had stared so long up the white road, yet in that way I missed him. Not missed the saint, but John. He and the mechanician stopped only to change horses, the waiter told me, and then fled on. "Fled" was the word the servant used, in Italian it is worse in sound, and he gave it all his value.

"He asked for me?" I quavered. The man reluctantly admitted that he had, but had bade him say on no account for me to follow him. The dress-suit case was handy, and I sat on it. The signora looked at me pityingly, and her friends came over. I set my teeth and smiled. A set teeth smile is not a pretty thing, but it was the best I had to offer the signora's friends.

"Then he'll return to-night," I said to the signora, "and I'll unpack my things." I was a daughter of the Minerva Club, you see, I was brave, I was wise. I was a daughter all the afternoon. I walked, I watched the road, I counted out my money, and I watched the road. At night the mail coach set down

its load of weary travellers. They ate when I did, but in the common room. I had the waiter in a room all to myself, while the signora's friends looked through the flapping blinds. The officer of the *carabinieri* sipped his vermouth outside the door, and would have talked to me but my eyes were straining through the darkness of the road. Up till midnight, I was a true daughter of my old Minerva Club, that and my faith in John who never yet had failed me, though he had hurt me, kept me brave; but when my candle guttered out, and the room was dark, and the rain drops fell upon the tiles as they once fell upon my grandfather's roof when I was just a little thing and visiting, why then I gave up trying and I cried. Just cried because I was deserted, and the rain was falling, and I had no money, and it was already Wednesday. One day more to get the boat from Genoa. "Just to get home." My pride had been reduced to that—"just to get home."

After a while I slept, a heavy sleep, the sleep that sticks one's eyelids and that clogs one's brain—the sleep of tears. After a while I dreamed I heard a motor horn, and half waking dreamed it once again, and quite waking knew it was no dream at all, but the clear, high pitched note of our own car. I ran to my single window, which gave upon the courtyard and not upon the street, and listened once again. Again it sounded, but the warning this time turned me quite cold, for surely it was growing indistinct.

I cried out at the cruelty of this, and without a

candle or light of any sort, groped along the stone corridors to a small window that looked out upon the road. Again I heard the horn, still fainter and farther down the valley. Still farther down the valley! I pressed my hand against my mouth to keep from screaming out the truth: that John had passed along the road. I looked down on the muddy way, and by the hanging lantern of the inn saw the broad track of motor tires. So John had passed me by!

Until morning I tossed about, and cried sudden freshets of tears and counted over my money, but when the sun was growing warm I slept again. At noon I rose with that new strength and faith in life that sleep gives, even running husbands have their noble points; for quite three hours I felt that I could trust in John, and that this patience which we teach to little children but do not know ourselves must be my close companion for to-day. Some message *had* to come before the night would fall. Then if he failed me I would leave the ruby ring, take what was left and join the peasants on their mountain trip to Genoa. In following this plan there was one feature that seemed to favour me. I had deciphered from a poster which lured the country people to a newer world that the boat sailed late on Thursday. So, did the diligence make decent time, I could sell all my other trinkets when I reached the city and still catch the steamer.

I did not mind the signora looking at me pityingly now, nor her friends who whispered *poverina*,

nor the landlord whose face had grown to several dollars, but very anxious ones. My watch was mostly in my hand throughout the afternoon, and the blood pumped up into my face at distant sounds that might have been a motor. And once I stood before the abbey and whispered to that beautiful Colombo, "Oh, please, dear saint, make John come back, oh, please, dear saint, give me a sign."

And old Colombo, never liking women anyway, just grunted out "I'll fix her," and straightway the diligence that was to take me on to Genoa lumbered into view. One hour they had for supper, and I one hour haltingly to explain and offer up the ruby. With heavy feet I stumbled back. With heavy eyes I met my landlord's; the landlord's eye looked not a penny, they were smiling.

"The signora has a letter," said the landlord.

"It all depends on the commencing," I told the landlord, but I spoke in English. "He may not want me back, you know."

"*Non capisco*," said the landlord, as I broke into the letter. "*Io*"—but I stopped him with a cry of joy.

"It doesn't matter if you don't," I answered him; "he starts it off 'my darling.'"

Chapter XIV

THIS was John's letter:

"MY DARLING:

"Seven in morning at present writing—grey, drizzly, but Piacenza. Sand man in my eyes, but must write to my child to set her little heart at rest before I go to sleep. Definition of sleep? A thing to do when everything else is done. Haven't 'met up' with it for twenty-eight hours, but expect to shortly.

"Felt mighty bad, Peggy, not to see you when Faust and I drove through in a hired cart yesterday afternoon. That soiled waiter said you had gone off to pray. Faust wouldn't wait—declared you'd have more comfort where you were. Faust is the mechanician—a skilful, wilful person. Insisted that I drive the car back to Piacenza for a good going over in his garage, and let the *sposa* follow in a carriage. Follow in a carriage, *sposa*, and picture John making that descent at night—blackness, exposed cliffs, trees blown across our path—just Faust and I and humping, bumping car.

"This no news to you, however, if you received the note I stuck under the door of inn as we passed through at midnight. Hope you found the twenty francs as well, I feared you might run short of

pocket money, but if you've bought the town of Bobbio, please drop it down a chasm as you come along. Tooted hard to wake up that gang of cut-throats—no offense to you—knew you couldn't hear me being way at the back. So we pegged on, conviction growing firm in minds of both that gasoline was watered. Me flim-flammed, Peggy, when I filled the tank right here in Piacenza, just like old farmer —shell game—county fair.

"Faust and I did not pry about the gasoline with matches, both thinking well of our respective faces, but as the dawn was breaking rolled snorting vehicle into an empty stable just as the rain descended in a torrent. To my surprise the barn was full of labourers, men and women, stretched on the ground, making acquaintance with that exhaustion known as sleep. They staggered out as we came in, rubbing eyes in lieu of morning toilet, ready for the day. Faust took it as the natural course of life, but seems to me, Peg, things need a lot of evening up somehow.

"It *was* water! Watered stock, my dear, sold to old Gaffer Ward. Mechanic cleared out carburetter and we went gallumphing on, young Mr. Motor very happy to be vindicated and Faust filled with satisfaction and talking of "the ladies" as Italians always do when joyful. I didn't mind so long as he was a success with carburetters too.

"That wasn't all—don't think it. It was a night of H_2O with us. Five miles further found that the

radiator needed what the gasoline did not but had. It was coming down a foot an hour out of the clouds, but not collectively. Away off in the mist we saw a water tank, one belonging to the government, but we didn't care. Ward on the ground, Faust on his shoulders dipping from the top with bucket. Results fine. Ward very proud, thinking himself tumbler at the show, lifted one leg and waved the other casually. Faust not prepared, clutched something hurriedly, down came a twenty gallon douche and Faust—both on my neck. Then 'adding to the horror of the scene' was heard the pit-pat of the county constables.

"Tremble not, we left them far behind, and made for city gates. Upon approaching them an auto of home make rolled from the barriers and bore down on us. We splashed each other as we veered with a friendly interchange of mud. "Hello Northern!" said the driver, and I could hardly answer "Hello Haynes!" before the mist had swallowed them. Me, kind of tired and maudlin after long night, winked back a something in my eyes—just water, Peggy, water.

"Your sleepy,
"JOHN."

Various emotions filled my heart as I read John's letter. The very elemental one of making all kinds of a racket until I discovered who found John's midnight note with the twenty *lire* enclosed gave place,



SAVONA

"A pleasant open space where the ristorante stood"

as I continued, to a sweet thankfulness that the additional forty *lire* had been safely delivered through the agency of the mailcoach. I found myself inexplicably weary, too, with no strength to pick out insulting words from my red dictionary, and howl them interrogatively at the waiter or the knavish landlord. Doubtless they would deny stealing the money did I ask them, and that would be a humiliating defeat; better, far better, to remain seemingly unconscious of the crime. I think it is a Tammany policy and indicates self-respect if nothing else.

At three the following morning I covered the ground in a hired *carozza*, once more over the old trail to Piacenza. The driver kept peeping around at his perplexing fare who refused to take any notice of the wonders of the sunrise and who spent her time jingling a coin in her hand and flipping it down upon her knee with the repeated cry of "heads I go; tails, I stay." He couldn't understand and I couldn't explain to him just how serious a game it was to me—especially as it kept coming out "heads" every time, so that I was obliged to do it over and over again in order to give "tails" a perfectly fair chance But even with a hundred trials and several different kinds of coins, that fierce Vittorio Emanuele kept bobbing up, and I know now why I never liked his face—there's something sinister about it.

It was comforting to have my plans so thoroughly





SAVONA

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decided, although, of course, I always meant to take the boat. John had been kind to me, his letter breathed his thoughtfulness. Why could I not for once be kind to John? I would. I'd take the boat.

But if he thinks for half a minute that the Minerva Club will not see through this scheme when after the decree, he marries Mrs. Baring, he doesn't properly estimate their keen sagacity. Oh, how that drives the iron into my soul! To let them know that John could ever care for anyone but me! I *must* stay on. At least I am a "habit" since I am a wife. He's thirty-eight, even a habit can endear itself. I flipped coins madly after these reflections, but the royal family stared up at me with little variation. "Heads, I go," was the final, last and ultimate of all the *ultimati*.

Anyway, it's great to have the right upon your side, especially if your husband won't stick by you. But John looked like a sticker when he met me at the station. And he was glad to see me, and I was glad I was a "habit." The car was waiting, and we started off with the steady reassuring heart throb of an engine which had suffered but was itself once more.

"It was the water, Peggy. More in the tank, more in the tubes—and dirt besides. Never let me wander from my chamois skin again. There are some strainers that these dogs use that hold the water and others fixed to let it through. I said a few

things to the dealer here that he won't forget soon. But the only way to make sure, the mechanician tells me, is to buy from a fresh *demijohna* that hasn't had the plaster broken from the mouth. Still this is the first time, and," nodding grimly, "it will be the last."

Then as a new thought appeared to strike him, he made a gesture towards his pocket. "Dig your hand down deep in my pocket, child. A crazy looking waiter handed me some sealed instructions to give to *mia sposa*. It was the nervous man."

I dug down and peeked into my letter:

"Gentilissima Signora: There is yet time, but quick, quick, quick. Antonio."

"What is it?" questioned John.

"Says my handkerchief has not been found. I dropped one." Which I had.

"Must have stolen it, the beggar. He was blue with fright or rage or some such passion when he heard of our delay. I thought he'd tear his hair out."

"Oh, no, I think he's just romantic, John, and is doing what he thinks I want—or what I ought to want," I added, softly.

It was very nice to sit close to John, to keep my hand upon his coat sleeve and to say "dear" to him often. I knew I dared allow myself such weaknesses since it was for the last time. John liked it too, and, as always, when he's happy, opened the throttle along the level road through Voghera and Novi Ligure, and

made the landscape whiz. I couldn't very well insist upon his going slower, being so anxious to catch the steamer. Still it seemed cruel rushing me out of his life like that, and just for the æsthetic side I was glad when we began to climb again. We had to go quite slow in fact, for while the route was milder than the Bobbio one, as John himself said, "an Apennine is a mountain and not a sausage, no matter how you go."

We had stopped for luncheon at Voghera and again at Novi, at my suggestion, for a cup of chocolate. It must be understood I was in haste, but felt the wisdom of storing up what strength I could so as to be quite ready for the ordeal of parting. John, out of decency, would have to make a fuss, I argued, and it would be exhausting to say no to him. I wouldn't have him on the pier, I had quite decided that. Even when the heart is breaking something awfully funny always happens. Once, a hundred years ago, when I was young and mother took us girls to Europe, the nicest man I knew came down to say good-bye. He stood right by a window on the second floor of the pier, so that we could look into one another's eyes up to the last. And how we looked! The bell rang and the waters churned, and the people wiped their eyes and cheered, and as the boat swung out I tore a bunch of violets from my heart and threw them to him. He caught and kissed them beautifully, and then that awful boat came back and stayed for fifty minutes. We hated one another ever

afterwards, so I made up my mind when John and I must part we'd run no chance of the ridiculous.

I had intended saying many things to John before we reached the city, but when we made the summit and started to wind down it was so very turney that I thought it best to keep his mind upon the steering wheel. We sped on with great rapidity, too fast by far. It was most dangerous. John said he liked it. We would get in quite early, and I said "that's good," with emphasis, hoping he would remember the import of my words when I was far away. When I was far away! That touched my heart. We were so near, very near, to parting. And then before we reached the city, just as we struck the awful road that leads up to the gates of Genoa, I did an awful thing. I hate to tell it, and never will I know how it could possibly have happened. It was this way. John yearned hard for a smoke, and I was sympathetic, wishing to humour him on little things, and said I'd steer while he could get a light. I did, but oh, that road! It was so jolty, and before I had steered for fifty feet, right in our path ahead of us I saw an awful rut, and as I saw the rut I saw some barrel staves that lay upon the other side. Upon my word I didn't know the nails were half so long as they turned out to be. I simply thought it might be well to take the staves in preference to the rut. So I turned out. And then, can you believe it, we had a puncture! It was our first. In all our sixteen hundred miles we had never

met barrel staves like that, and John had been "some proud" of such a record, especially as the tires had been made at home, and were not those French affairs. He didn't stop for much lamenting, just said, "We'll make a good run yet"—right in the face of all my planning—I *mean*, a puncture takes so long to fix. And being nervous (fearing that I'd miss the boat) I couldn't find a single tool without John's getting up and helping me. And when I handed him the inner tube I lost the top off the valve, and that took time. Still it did get fixed, and John is such a horribly dexterous driver, that just as the sun plopped into the sea we reached the lighthouse, and when we turned to run along the quay into the city the stars were but beginning to peep out.

And what a sight the harbour was! Small, its miles of docks a mass of merchandise, with craft of every kind from every country packing the basin, some quietly at anchor, some pulling up their hawsers, some settling down with the great noise of chains, some coming swiftly in before the sunset gun would close the port, some stealing out, leaving a knife-like cut in the quiet water. There were all kinds, and there was one, a great white boat with rows of bullet-headed lights, not in the harbour but beyond, with her long nose straight for the west, and going it like mad.

"That is a pretty boat out there," I breathed to John.

"Why that," said John, "that is the German

boat, the *Königin Luise*. Pshaw! but for our bad puncture we'd have seen her start. You did that." (This to me.)

"I know I did," I answered, and smiled at him the wise smile of the sphinx.

Chapter XV

Now that ill luck had prevented me from going on the boat and a making a swan-like end (a swimming, not a singing one), there was but one road left for me, that was the noble path of Dame Griselda, a sort of Griselda up to date, for I intended to figure slightly in the fight, though always gently. Once I saw a picture of a "lady featherweight; she seemed a very dainty person, and while differing in costume, I feel a little like her. The poster said she was so square, and that's what I am too. So if John can only keep his head, he'll find before the trip is over that a square "habit" is better for a wife than a giraffe.

Many things have happened since we drove to Genoa. Plans have been changed, and I am doubtful still if it was the woman or the mountains that forced John to hurry on the morning after we arrived.

To be quite fair, no one who loves a motor car can love a Genoese. John said nothing but a cow catcher could clear their paths, and if I'd get up with the dawn, before the citizens heard he was leaving, he was game for it also; but that was after we met Mrs. Baring, and found that she was leaving early too. At four she left. I said that we might get away at six. It was a challenge, but I said it pleasantly.

I had thrown down the glove, or rather since I had become a lady featherweight, I had put it on. It was a gentle mitt.

I looked at Miss Grey as I did so, and to my great surprise and discomfort, I found her large white eyes fixed on me in a wild appeal, and under cover of a general laugh she whispered, "Watch them closely, I'll not be there." I reddened at this, and I quite determined in spite of my sympathy for her lone estate that I'd not let her spy upon my husband nor to suggest that I should, and when the chance presented itself I swept her out of the *salle à manger* and up to our own room for a few words between ourselves.

I had to be quite stern myself and think of my great wrongs and of this added humiliation, or I would have melted at the sight of poor Miss Grey, who sat quite rigidly on a chair, grasping her left fingers tightly with her right hand, as though she feared that they might tell tales.

"Why don't you go with Mrs. Baring?" I asked sternly, plunging right in.

"Because she doesn't want me to," she answered, with some heat. "I think she fears I interfere," she added, bitterly.

"But don't you see I am with them almost always?"

"You serve her purpose. She needs you. It gives a proper air to what is going on."

It was not a pretty speech, and she jerked out the

words as though it hurt her. I could see she spoke from that wicked sense of duty which makes a very good woman so great a pest on earth, but how it cut me.

"Miss Grey," I spoke kindly, "this can mean nothing to you except that now you find yourself much more alone. It's only her companionship that you are losing, probably her friendship stays the same for you."

I stopped, for suddenly Miss Grey became Miss Grey no longer. Two red spots burned hot in her cheeks; shame crept up into her eyes and yet she looked straight into mine.

"You don't suppose," she made response, "that I am really suffering because a woman, my employer, turns her back on me? You don't suppose I'd care for that?"

I stared at her, bewildered. "What then?" I said.

She swallowed hard, her eyes still glued on mine.

"Go on," I urged.

Then in a burst the words came from her: "Well, why not speak? For just once in my life I'd like to tell the truth. To have out what I feel. I often thought when I was a girl that if I could stand out on the street corner and just for once shriek up to the skies all the low things I had ever heard or read about I could go on, if I would be allowed after that torrent, and play the lady. Of course I never did shriek out, because I've always been one of these

paid companions whose duty is to be amiable at twenty plunks a month. I said *plunks*, you noticed that? I'm glad I said it. Of late years I haven't wanted to shriek out. It frightened me to think about it, and so the strength of that suppression has gathered to this great confession. My heaven! that's a rhyme. Did you ever hear of anything so awfully ridiculous?"

Miss Grey began to laugh hysterically. I shook her hard.

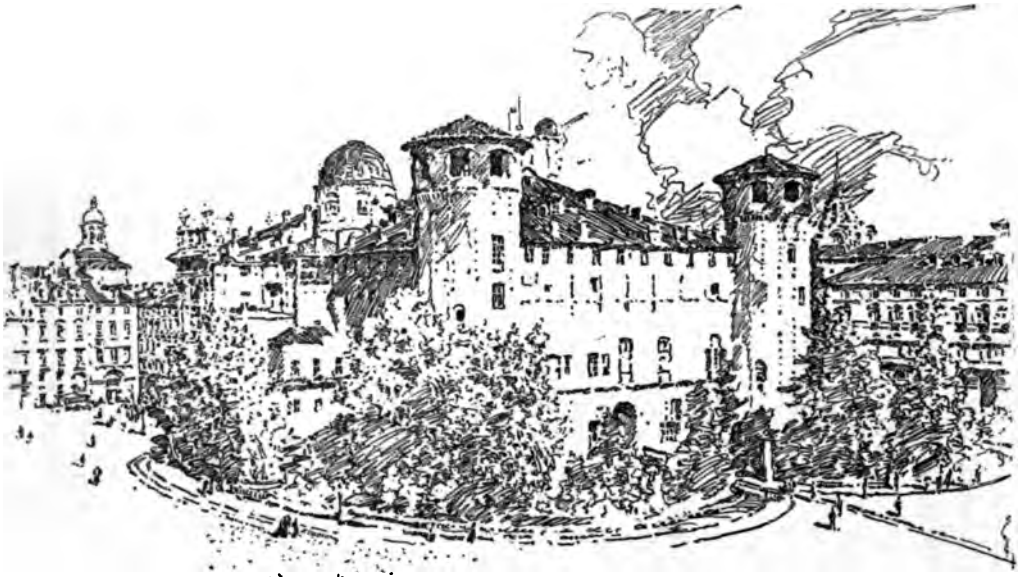
"Don't stop," I cried. "The grimmest things in life are always funniest. Go on."

She stared at me a moment, then laughed a little, and went on. "You think it's funny, do you? Yes, I suppose it's funny for an old maid like me to so forget her shame and pride and decency as to love where there's no love for her, to give what's never asked of her, to die a hundred pangs of jealousy and go on living as she dies with a paid companion smile upon her lips, I guess that's funny."

My brain was thick. "But are you crazy? How can you feel so over Mrs. Baring?"

Miss Grey rose to her feet, and spoke with a great wave of shame, yet glorious courage. "And are you a fool? Must it be lettered on a blackboard for you? It's not the woman." She screamed it out as she might have screamed once on that street corner. "*It's the man I love.*"

There was an awful silence, and Miss Grey sat in her chair again. I found myself not very sorry



TURIN
"So young in spirit, and yet so old in buildings"

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either for her or me, but just apologetic and embarrassed at forcing her confession of her love for my unworthy husband. I felt I should resent it, and yet, even while I thought of him as an unworthy thing, my admiration for him suddenly increased. I'd rather that it hadn't, but it did. I can't explain it and I know that the Minerva Club could never set me straight. Miss Grey had no emotions. She sat there, spent but splendid.

"I'm so sorry," at last I stammered, "I'll not tell, of course. I'm not happy either. We'll have to stick by one another."

"You're very kind," she murmured, stiffly, my commonplaces bringing her back to her narrow self once more. "We had some sympathies in common in Bologna, I remember, still on that day she smiled on everybody. You shouldn't mind a general distribution."

"She can smile on any man but one," I said.

"I know, I feel so too," Miss Grey replied.

"Oh, don't, it is too hideous," I cried.

Then Mrs. Baring's voice out in the hall put us in our accustomed roles once more. We got into them easily and things went on just as they always had. That phenomenon has ceased to vex me, and if John has learned as much of motors as I have of life in these five giddy weeks he can build cars for a living, and I'll guarantee to sell them.

The exodus from Genoa was full of motor joy, the cup not running over till the suburb of Sestri

was passed through, for the condition of the roads was horrible, and the traffic even in the early morning very great. The Riviera di Levante is a rosary of towns, rugged little jewels held together by one lovely compact pearl of road. It is one of the few ways in Italy constantly used by autos, and dire threats for those who speed are displayed at the entrances of the villages. There were hills, of course. Italy is pretty full of them, the road winding in and out of sweet-smelling pine forests, skirting the edge of the cliffs that bore sheerly down into the sea, or running placidly along in touching distance of the lapping waves. There was to be a hundred miles of this, and I was very happy, filled with the contentment that is derived from living in the moment. But not so John.

He had read something in the evening paper on the night before, had spelled it out laboriously, that had, in a way, darkened the beauty of this run. It had to do with mountains and a race.

John argued to himself and me along the road, the arguments were fragments flung at me from time to time. I didn't answer all of them; he didn't wish me to.

"There is going to be a great race two days from now, I've read," John began, casually. "The Alpine climbing contest of the year."

"Horse race?"

"Great Scott, no! Motor! It's over the Mont Cenis pass, or rather up to it. The motors start

from Susa. That's on the Italian side." (Pause.) "One goes by way of Turin."

"Who goes?"

"Those coming from the Italian side, of course. Don't be so stupid, dear. Napoleon built the road. It's a fine road, no villages like this punk piece we're getting now."

"But see the sea. It's lovely, John, as smooth as glass."

"Fine. But can you drive a motor on it? No." (Silence.) "You've never motored in the Alps, have you Peggy?"

"Now, John, you know I haven't."

"Nor have I either. It's quite a thing to say when you get home, to say you've motored through the Alps. Not many American cars have done that, you bet."

"We have crossed the Apennines three times."

"Two and a half. That trip to Bobbio was only half the way."

"It was almost to the summit. We did the work."

And this time John was silent for a minute, then he broke out again emphatically.

"Look here, Peggy, I think if we don't cross the Alps we'll be short sports."

"Now, John," I cried out in despair, "don't bully me like that. You know you can't say anything more dreadful to a true American."

"Of course I can't," triumphantly. "That's what we'll be," he added with conviction.

I made another effort. "But, John, we are miles out of the way."

"Oh, not at all," said John, "we'll have some breakfast at Savona, it's just a few miles on, then we can cut across the Apennines and go by way of Acqui, Nizza, Asti, and a whole lot of towns. I've got it written down." John had the grace to blush.

"Have you been studying this all out?" I asked him.

"Well, since you press the point," he reluctantly admitted, "I looked it up in the garage. That's why I was so late in coming round to the hotel."

I didn't speak.

"We've covered this road now for thirty miles. It's all like this, just towns and road and sea. Think of that race and of those giant cars. Just think."

And I was thinking, but not of the race of motors. It had occurred to me that John had quite forgotten Mrs. Baring, which was a pleasant thought, but I dared not let it linger, like a true lady featherweight I must be fair and square.

"But Mrs. Baring, John," I nobly urged, "she's got the start of us by two good hours at least. She and her party will expect us on to Nice to-night."

His reply was long in coming, but it was well worth while.

"I never gave my word we'd come. It won't affect her plans. I want to be with her of course, she's fine, but, Peg," his tone was pleading, "a woman's not the Alps."

I rippled gloriously. (That sounds like Henry James.) "Of course she's not," I said. "You're right, John, after all, we will go over the Mont Cenis." And dear John thanked me humbly.

Savona was a town of factories and wharfs, and a pleasant open space where the *ristorante* stood, and underneath its colonnades we had our *déjeuner*. I had fresh lobster, very good and very cheap, but John ate maps and drank race notes. The run to Turin was one hundred thirty miles. His plan was to put the car in a garage upon arrival for a good going over, then sleep through Saturday, and at midnight make the start, that we might reach the summit before the barriers were up. John said we would probably find companions on the way. We did. Waste places in Italy are rare.

The road on to Turin offered no great obstacles. There were steep grades, of course, and John became quite peevish when I chose for my evening hymn, "Over the Hills to the Poor-house"; but he need not have been so sensitive, we "ate them up" just as he "bit the dust." I never had such large bites of the commodity before. As a rule it lingers in the rear to inflict those poorer in horse-power if not in expletives.

As we neared the end of the run the darkness of the night was made thicker by this dust that the soft wind swept about us, but the direction of Turin was unmistakable, for we were not alone save for the sense of isolation that one feels in a country that is

unknown to him. We found companions on the way, if there is companionship in the sound of a deep horn in the far distance accompanied almost instantaneously by a terrific rush of wheels and more blinding dust as some great motor pounded past us to Turin. From all the country roads they came pell-mell into the city, we, feeling our unaccustomed way, were left behind as recklessly they crossed and criss-crossed one another or bored in upon their rivals with loud laughter. John stood it just as long as I thought he would.

"See here," he finally exclaimed, "I must get into this. What do they think this car I'm driving is? A wayside bench?" And he opened up the throttle.

Prudence and satisfaction strove for mastery with me. I understood their lack of fear. To the man inside the car that element becomes a tiny part of him before he has motored many miles. The very bigness and the power of the machine that carries him along gives to him a feeling of security. What keeps the man inside within the bounds of law and order is the fear of what happens to the man outside, and when there is no man outside to reckon with then—John opens up the throttle. I thought as he joined in the general scrimmage and swung past one large car to be halted by another crossing us, what Miss Grey had once said, that the only hope for the pedestrian was to let these cars exterminate each other, or give them more time, when each would exterminate itself, and as the thought passed through

my mind, out of the dust, strong in the light of the first city electric pole, flashed a big car with the glitter of a uniform deep in the tonneau, and a laughing driver who was steering with one hand as he waved the other in the air.

Five seconds afterwards out of the blinding dust ahead of us came a great crash, a great cry, a great silence. Then the sudden set of brakes was heard from the cars that were near the dreadful spot—quickly, like a military order—the grinding of the wheels, and the warning call raised for those in the rear of "*Accidente, accidente!*" The pall of dust rose slowly, and by a pillar of stone that marked the way lay the wrecked motor of the laughing driver.

The bodies had been thrown an unbelievable distance. They lay quite still, the three, face downward, flung to death. I think that John got out, I know I did not move. I watched. It was too big a thing for any feeling that I could possibly display. I simply watched. Some woman in a car near by began to shriek. "Ah, Dio! Dio! Dio!" shrieked the woman. Her voice added to the general confusion that had followed on the silence and the lifting up of the dust curtain. The bodies were turned over and there was a demand for a doctor. It was taken up by all the crowd, "*si, si, dottore*" was the cry. But there was no response and nothing done beyond the idle pulling about of the bodies. The officer's gold braid shone brightly. I couldn't see his face. John said that the delay could not have been two

minutes. Perhaps so. The true measuring of time should be by circumstance.

I only know a man, young, blond, leaped from a great grey motor that had shot from out the city, and with the help of John had lifted the poor officer, who was limply dead, and the other two, who bore faint signs of life expiring, into the big grey motor and whirled back into the town. When a general is needed, a general will be found. A cordon of *bersilieri*, the patrollers of the roads, came swiftly down the street. The splintered car was guarded for the night. The knots of haggard motorists broke up and turned each to his separate motor. The engines, pounding angrily at their repression, were released, and the autos raced, *raced*, mind you, on into the city.

When John came back from the garage and found me in my room he held a telegram.

"I wired from Savona," he announced, "it's quite all right. We'll meet again at Aix."

"Who will?"

"Why you and I and Mrs. Baring. Aren't you pleased?"

"I somehow don't think that I care," I answered dully. When you have dipped a little in the book of Death the telegram of Life is hardly worth the reading.

Chapter XVI

TURIN is so delightful, so wonderfully arcaded, so young in spirit, and yet so old in buildings that nothing but a great garage could have kept me off the streets. Anyone could get a room in the hotels, but it was a lucky motor that could find a place to rest its tires. This had not occurred to John, and accompanied by a sleepy hotel porter he had driven our car to Turin's best *rimessa*, feeling apologetic that he must arouse the watchman from his slumbers. Even with the scores of motors that had come thundering in when we did he did not expect to find a lively town of the great beasts massing themselves together under one domed roof.

"The place was light as day, Peg," he told me, as we sat at our late breakfast, "a hundred mechanicians with tired faces lay sprawled about the cars, under and over them. The foremen in blue blouses went in and out among the men carrying electric hand lights. Messenger boys came in with wires from motorists on the way, asking if space could be reserved for them, and half distracted dudes slipped louis in the hands of the quite distracted boss, begging that each receive attention first. He kept the louis and so far as I could see held on to the attention too."

"And how many louis did it cost you, John?" I asked. John winked.

"Not one. It was no time for louis if I had had them. How I ever got inside is quite beyond me. The car was shut out by the big barred gates that only opened at the King's command. I thought if I would kneel and kiss his hand I might get some attention. He wore a blouse too, but suffering Moses, what a manner!"

"And where is our car, John, in the streets?"

"Oh, no it is inside," he remarked, coolly. "You see, beneath that proud exterior beat the heart of a mechanic after all, a real mechanic, and that's the finest thing I can say of any man. 'Signor, it is impossible,' he said, in very good English, edging me nearer to the door as he spoke, 'we are quite crazy now with work. Some cars go out to-morrow without a coat of paint; some without fittings, even lacking extra tires. I not only could not put a man on yours to overlook it, but I will not have the space. It is full now, and more are still to come.'

"By that time, dear, he had me 'way out in the street, then turned to fly, evidently intending to bolt me out, but as he turned the motor caught his eye. He lingered, the true mechanic bursting through his pride. Say, Peggy, it was great. You should have seen him, held like a snared bird.

"'I've never seen that build before,' he said, approaching. The car sat up and twinkled her star eye. 'The engine runs quite nicely,' I replied, and



LANS LE BOURG

"A morning in Lans le Bourg could sweep away the cobwebs of the most troubled night"


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turned it over, casually, of course. The spark caught—so did he. 'Steady and most quiet' was his comment. 'Runs just as quietly,' I answered, flying up into the seat. 'It's not the motor that needs going over, just the brake bands that I want examined for the descent. You'll find them different from European models.' I waited for results.

"'Ah, well,' he said, swelling a little, 'there is not much that my men can't grasp. Still it is always interesting, these new ideas; some day Americans will beat us, but not yet. Just drive her in, sir.' His mechanistic eyes were gleaming, Peggy, and so I drove her in."

"I had intended to go 'do' the town," I said, pushing back my chair and rising hastily, "but I think I'll go to the garage instead." John sat still, shaking inwardly. "Now, John, what are you laughing at?"

"The motor beam, it's in your eye," he answered.

"Well, mote or beam—I'm going anyway," and John, receiving my cheap wit with as much enthusiasm as a husband dares permit himself, rushed off with me.

My goodness, that garage! It was motor-town indeed. Each make of cars off by itself like warring political factions and painted signs hung over them of Fiat, Mors, Mercedes, Panhard. Our car stood alone doing its own advertising, and always with a motor fiend or two lifting the hood or prodding at its tires. All of the owners were on hand, most of

them busy, even their French chauffeurs worked. I can say nothing more than that. All of the French chauffeurs that I have seen will each day try out his engine and remedy the faults, but they hold aloof and scrub spots from their clothes with gasoline while the workmen of the garages oil and clean. For this they pay out of their own pockets. No dirty work for François.

Tommaso had been assigned to overlook our car, and Tommaso did it very thoroughly, that is, he looked right over it, and us, whenever he passed our way. He was full of good intentions, was Tommaso, but full of work as well, and as the day waned acquired another fulness that came with many proffers of the friendly flask.

"If just to get him spiffled would help our brake bands any I'd have him that in fifteen minutes, and paralysed in thirty," grumbled John. "But the nuttier one grows the less one knows of nuts, and if I can get the proper jacks I'll do the job myself."

So John put on his working clothes and went off to find the implements, but as I started to get busy also I saw a slightish man in flannels watching me. He was neatly gotten up, which wore upon me some—greasy as I already was, and I gently smiled at him, waggling my head sadly towards the oil cups I was about to fill.

"The signora finds it difficult?" He put the question in that kind of bad Italian which stamps a man immediately as English.

So I answered him in the tongue of our two countries.

"Well, yes," I said, demurely, "but you see some things we have to do ourselves. Not everyone can get the hang of our machine." It touched him.

"Oh, I dare say, but I have made a scientific study of the motor. Really, perhaps I shouldn't say it,"—this with some footlight hesitation—"but you know that there are very few machines I can't get hold of. Perhaps I shouldn't say it, but there you are, you know."

"Wonderful," I murmured; "these oil cups now, for instance." He rose to the fly. "Oh, I can put those back for you. I'll have them in before your man gets back."

"My husband," I corrected.

"Oh, yes, Americans, of course, how very jolly. My wife is an American. I understand 'em perfectly."

"Wives?"

"Well, no, Americans I meant. Just let me have those oil cups, madam."

"Your lovely flannels," I demurred.

"Oh, not at all. Kindly roll up my sleeves. Thank you. Besides there's always gasoline. I have my wife's hair washed in it. We call it the *essence* of life, not bad that—what?"

"Delicious," I vociferated. I could afford to do so. He was by that time busily at work intent upon my job. John came back with the jacks, and read

my mad manipulation of the brows with some approach to understanding. Gently he led him on from little task to little task, while I stood by and gasped out admiration. Perspiring yet delighted, he worked on, the motor beam within his eye.

"The whole game is to know your motor," he continued, as he oiled. "I went into the factory and worked for three weeks with the men before I took my car out. Now when this beastly prince of a chauffeur I have wants a day off and says we are out of order I go out and see just where we stand. Upon my honour I had some friends tied up for a week in a Swiss village because their driver fell in love with his landlady's daughter. Said he must send to England for extra parts, all rot, all Tommy rot."

We had grown to like our Britisher so well that we discouraged him from any fresh attack upon our car, and I rolled down his sleeves and cleaned him off and had him spick and span just as a *mécanicien* done up in leather approached, and with a bob of his forefinger announced the readiness of the *moteur* of "M. le Comte."

It didn't stagger us as much as it might have done five weeks ago. When Americans adopt the simplicity of the aristocrats then the corner stone of our aristocracy is laid. It takes more than a crest of a doubtful ancestor who lived across the water to mould the being. John and I turn our seal rings against our palm these days. Seal rings are not for Europe.

In the end it was Tommaso who tried out the

brakes. He rushed excitedly at us and amidst promises, tears, and pleadings, hurled us out into the street and sent us to our dinner.

"Since it must be a point of honour with him we'll let him do the work," John said.

"I think there is very little left but honour for him to work upon," was my reply.

But John, touched by this last absorption of Americanism, this steady recourse to the bar through working hours, was lenient; besides, he hungered.

We dined on flagstones. I don't mean that we ate them, but the meal was served out on the street, and there was music later on and always there were motor cars. But this time they were going from the city, pointed towards the Alps, and from all sides of us was heard the long, low do-o-o-om of the European horn, strangely prophetic sound!

It was nearing midnight when we started. Our trunk had been sent on by train to be held at the railroad barrier at Modane. We had only light luggage for impedimenta, and I think I might say right here that my crazy-quilt had been inadvertently (?) left behind in Pesaro, that's where The Thought had been created,—the thought of giving up further divorce proceedings—and at Piacenza where The Thought had blossomed and been frosted I left my diary. John had found it, however, when he went back with the car, and was terribly concerned. He said in the future he would look after it himself. I let him. I'll never make a note in it, no matter if he

beats me black and blue. Yet why dwell upon these things? There was nothing in John's heart it seemed to me just then but Alps, and no woman can be jealous of an Alp.

I went with him to the garage. It wasn't necessary, but those cars seemed to hold me. Tommaso's work had been completed, the foreman told us, and he had gone home to rest. The foreman spoke shamefacedly, drunkenness is the rarest of all the Anglo-Saxon innovations. It is still thought just cause for an apology. But Tommaso's work was done, and that was the main thing then.

And so was all the other work, and gleaming like a battery of strange implements of war, the cars in their long lines were made ready for the start. As they moved out the noise was like that of artillery discharging their projectiles as they travelled, for the mufflers had been cut out that the full force of the engines could be expended. The roar, the rattle, the quick sharp explosions, each characteristic of its motor and as quickly named by the enthusiasts as would a gun be recognised by military experts, filled the domed building with ear-splitting din, but it was glorious. The boss, the foreman, the mechanics, sweating, exhausted, stood at the gateway and wished *buona fortuna* to us all. The arc lights flickered and went out as the last car left the building. Our task began as theirs had ended.

Beyond Susa, the starting place, the ascent began. The grade of twelve per cent. was no more difficult

than many through the Apennines, but there was no top, there was no ending, and not a foot's cessation. It was too dark to see down in the valleys, but the road along the winding ways was well illumined by the searchlights of the ascending motors. It was a weird effect to see across a black abyss the moving lights of these shifting monsters as they climbed high ahead of us on a mountain opposite.

Half way up the ascent a mighty horror loomed before us. It was the Customs. We had quite forgotten that in the middle of the night the officers on the Italian border might not be quite prepared to fall out of their beds and remove lead seals from off an automobile, nor to restore to John the twenty-five dollars that he had paid in Naples. It was an awful moment as we approached the low stone house that marked the barrier, but blessings on Italians, they never sleep—except in carts. An officer saluted as we drew alongside, and after half an hour's delay we drove into the neutral zone, free from all seals and duties until the small French town at the foot of the descent was reached.

"No laws on race days, signor," said the officer, as John expressed his gratification in a good-bye burst of all the Italian that he could gather. "*A rivederci.*"

"No, no, it is *addio*, signor," was John's reply. and we drove sadly out of Italy. But as though in answer to our thoughts out of the dark pounded a grey motor and from the tonneau a voice rang out in

lusty Americanese: "Say au revoir, but not good-bye," sang the man, and the refrain came back to us with the low do-o-o-om of their horn as they wound on.

"Americans down thar in the canyon," said John in his best Dramatic Club manner. "Pears to me I've heerd thet air afore."

"Pears to me I seen thet car afore," I responded in falsetto.

"Gadzooks!" quoted John, uncertainly, for lack of Western phrases. Then back to his own once more. "I guess you're right, Peggy, that was the motor that carried those poor chaps last night, but the blonde general was Italian."

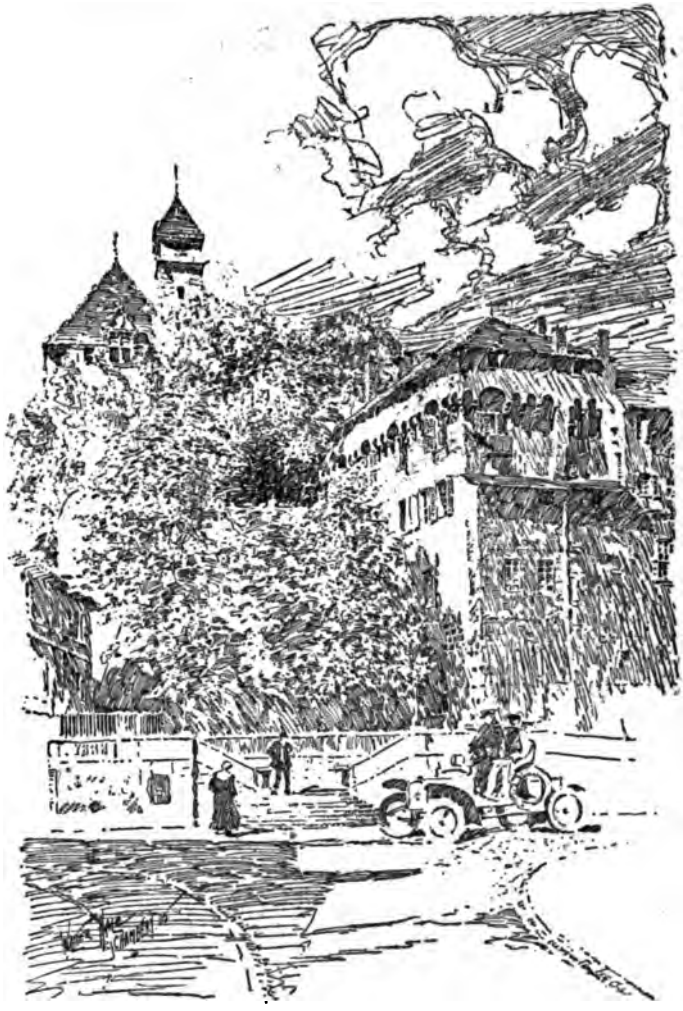
"So was the car."

"Well, rather," from John.

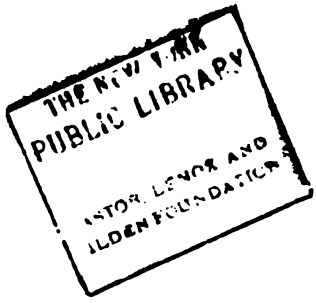
"Do-o-o-om," said the grey motor, high above us.

There was not much jesting on the trip, however, I truly wanted to be as impressed as possible, and kept saying to my inner self, "You're going up the Alps, the Alps, the Alps." Until my inner self made some quite rude reply like "Oh, be quiet, I know we're in the Yalps, the Yalps, the Yalps, and it's so dark that neither the inner nor the outer of us can see a thing."

"But I'm so happy, so uplifted," I told my inner self, "it must be the Alps that does it." My inner self was very practical. "That's just because you are by your husband's side," it taunted back. "It's not the Yalps with you, it's John."



CHAMBÉRY
"An ancient town, French to its finger tips"


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There is little use denying anything that one's inner self advances. You see it knows one through and through.

"Well, anyway," I snapped, "it is the Alps with John and not the woman." And then my dreadful inner self produced this awful thought: "How do you know it is not the woman?" With a most terrifically insinuating manner. "You judge him only by what he says and does. How can you ever tell what's in his mind? You sit right by his side and hold his coat sleeve with your hands, and pinch his arm. H'm! That's mere bone and muscle. You've got them, yes, but what's he *thinking* of?"

What was he thinking of indeed? There wasn't any way at all of finding out, there never will be. We might go on forever and I will never know. I confessed it to my inner self. "Of course not," it responded, satisfied, "Nobody ever knows but inner selves just what a husband thinks about."

"You know?" I questioned, eagerly.

"Oh, mercy no," it simpered. "Only his inner self knows that. Still, we are all related, all of us inner selves."

"You've taken from me my last shred of happiness," I sobbed.

"Oh, no," it answered calmly, "these conflicts come with darkness. Look over east, it's getting grey. Now you'll see something of the Yalps that is worth while. No whooped up emotions from this time on, I fancy."

My inner self subsided and John's voice broke in upon the conversation. "I've been thinking," started John.

"Oh, John, of what?" I screamed.

He laughed at me. "Peggy, you've been dozing. Oh, yes, we're clear up to the summit. I've been thinking that I'd like a drink."

Of course I'll never know how nearly he spoke the truth, but I encouraged what he said he thought. I had hot coffee, and that was hard to get, not that there was no coffee, but there were so many people wanting it. There were several hotels at the summit, and there were two billion motors, many of them massed together, sleeping quietly, with their owners in the tonneaux under blankets sleeping also. But the noisy element predominated, the kind who sit the old year out, stay up to greet the glorious Fourth, blow horns when anyone's elected, and turn every occasion that verges on the joyful into a hilarious pandemonium.

John's sympathies were with them entirely, and so were mine when a party of very jovial spirits invited us to squeeze our car into their allotted space, and offered coffee to the *signora Americana*, which their chauffeur was making over a spirit lamp. When the coffee had restored their senses to a condition verging on the normal I think they were vaguely surprised to find us in their midst, but they accepted us with much philosophy, and offered me the hospitality of a tonneau for a two hours' rest. Had it been the car of

Signor Diavolo himself I would have crawled into it, and flashed my teeth at him. A seven thousand feet ascent in the clear cold puts weights upon one's eyelids, and all through the first grey hours of Italy I dozed, comfortably conscious of the excitement going on about me.

The mists were out of the valleys when I awoke, and one long shaft of sunlight had thrust itself between two mountain peaks. It was then I thrilled as I looked down over the perilous road that we had climbed, and felt rather weepy, not stirred to any great emotion, but rather frightened at what we'd done in the blackness of the night.

Through the glasses I could see the soldiers stationed along the road, and hundreds of cyclists who as members of the Touring Club of Italy gave them assistance as patrollers of the way. The travel had been stopped, and a few automobiles were drawn up at perilous bends along the road. Some bore the pennant of the Red Cross, but others were forced to rest there since they had tarried and the track was closed before they could reach the summit.

Thanks to our convivial friends we had good places for the race. They seemed to feel that it was up to them to watch over us. I think John fostered this idea, and I know more than suggested that I was never very strong. A good place was given John so that he might watch me, not the race. John kept his arm around me when they were looking, but his eyes were on the road, and no insult in any

tongue could have driven him from that vantage point.

The first man came along much sooner than I thought he could possibly have managed. It was a great surprise because I knew when each number (the number on the car) was to leave Susa, and I don't see how in the world he got there so quickly. I looked very reproachfully at our motor, and John, immediately hurt, loving the thing as he does, said please to remember that the car coming up the mountain had just eight times the power of ours. Then more surprising things occurred, for by the time I had looked back to watch the progress of the car it was clear up the grade, right over the home plate, and that was all there was about it.

More came, all very fast, and more than fast. At first I found it just like a "good" game of baseball. I never see the balls in the games that John calls good,—they go so fast. I like the game of ball they played in our back lot when I was young, I could always tell just where it went. It was so with the racing cars until I had grown quicker, then it was with a sort of fearful joy I watched them as they whirred across the bit of fairly level ground and began the ziz-zag ascent known as the "ladder" before the top is reached. John could see them long before I could, crossing from one mountain to another. I never saw John so selfish with the glasses as he was that day. Watching for whales on shipboard develops comparatively a most ungrasping disposition.

"Do you want to see, dear?" John would say to me, squinting through them as he spoke.

"Yes, I would like to," I would answer him. Then John would pay no more attention to me than if I had not spoken. The only time he let me look was when a slow one limped along. Sometimes the cars crossed each other right at the turn, and all the women shrieked. Sometimes they would both strive for the inside of the track, and it seemed as if they would have to smash, but nothing happened. And I want to say right now of all the brave, the noble, the intrepid, rash, reckless adventurers, the racing driver for "mine." As a good "risk" he'd stand no chance with an insurance company, and as a husband I should count upon him only as a joy and pride from hour to hour. Still, if John would become one of them I'd take that glorious chance, and so I know would Mrs. Baring.

All the motorists who made any kind of a good record got kissed upon the cheeks by their men friends when they fell out of their cars, and for once in my life I thought it a most satisfactory custom. The women hung around and would have done it too, but there was little opportunity with their male escorts so keen about it. So they kissed one another, and some of them cried over the great favourite, the most daring of them all, who heated up his engine and got stuck. All of the cars came up with water boiling in their radiators. They just flew along with their tops off and didn't seem to mind. As John said,

"It sure was one plenty day," and that was before we had descended even.

We left before the *déjeuner*. The crowd was great, and the caterer from Turin not able to half serve them all, so with warm thanks we parted with our kindly yet inebriated friends. They wanted to kiss John. They loved him like a brother, but he fought them off, and with the wild look of a hunted animal drove down to Lans le Bourg. The town lay four thousand feet below, a splash in a seeming crevice of the mountains. The road was very tortuous. Stone shelters for wayfarers overcome by storms sprinkled the way, and avalanche sheds met one at every turn. I was glad that it was summer, for though much of the path was grim and grey, in the distance were pale green mountains, white topped and gleaming opalescent in the sun. I never dreamed there was such delicacy of colour in nature's greatest monuments.

I had very little time to think of colour though, for we hadn't gone a mile before a French racing car whisked by us, its work completed, going home, and on the car, accompanying the driver, was the blonde general of the tragedy at Turin. A half mile further on around a turn we saw him once again, but standing in the road waving for us to stop, and holding on one arm a badly wounded man. We stopped and he explained, first in Italian, later on in broken English that this poor cyclist had fallen down a little precipice. Would we not take him down to Lans le

Bourg where the authorities would see to him. His racing friend could not have carried him, it was so small—the car. If we would take him he would follow with the wheel.

It didn't seem at all surprising that the general was again handling wounded men. It seemed quite natural that I should share my seat with this hurt fellow, and try to staunch the flow of blood from a great cut on his head. One never seems to have much time for real emotions when there is a real occasion for them. The man himself was quite too faint to speak or feel, his hands and face were badly skinned, and he was breathing with great difficulty. I feared John must think him very ill, we went so fast. I looked at John. I wondered why we went so very fast. At one sharp turn his cap blew off. "Shan't we stop, John?" I asked.

"No, no, don't talk," said he. I found my flask and gave some brandy to the man. What if he died upon our hands, I thought, that's why John takes these awful chances in this perilous descent. His death would probably mean all sorts of complications. I wondered if I would have French enough to weather through a court examination. I forced more brandy down the man's throat. My linen coat was red all down the sleeve with trickling blood. John, hatless, white, drove on, rounded the last curve safely, and drew up before the officer of the Customs. The wounded man, his strength slightly returned, was carried to the hospital, murmuring thanks incohe-

rently. I turned to John. "You were good not to stop the car and get your cap," I articulated weakly, "losing it because the man was hurt."

"It wasn't that," John answered, quietly, "the brake wouldn't hold. I couldn't stop."

It was too awful for correct expression. I giggled with hysterics. "John Ward, of all the times to be without a brake, when going down 'the Yalps.'"

John laughed too, like a relieved child that had escaped a whipping. "Well, I did it, but someone has got to pay for it," he returned with growing energy. "I lay that at Tommaso's door."

And it was Tommaso, the Americanised, who had brought us so in touch with death. John had ordered that he replace the old cotter pins (I quote him, it is a pin quite unfamiliar to me) with new ones for the brake rod connections, and Tommaso had not done it, so when the steepest of the descent began, the bolts fell out, and the brake didn't hold at all.

"Had there been a level of ten feet," completed John, "I might have stopped with the reverse and made the repairs myself, but there wasn't, and the man was hurt, and I never liked that old cap anyway."

"John, you're such a hero," I hugged his arm in ecstasy.

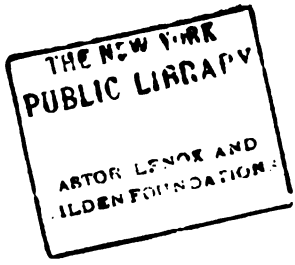
"Nonsense," John replied, much pleased. "You're a little brick yourself. Just wait until I meet Tommaso if you want to see me at my best."

But Tommaso was a long way off, and we were



AIX LES BAINS

"The Hotel de Ville, the only show place in Aix that anybody knew of"


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down the Alps, and the blonde general appeared upon the wheel with John's cap under his arm, also the French Customs were tightly closed on Sundays, and we were glad that we could walk over to the little French hotel and rest. The car was rolled into the Customs House garage prepared for such emergencies. We were in an autoing country, we could see that at a glance, and there in a corner was the big grey motor.

"Yours?" John questioned of the general. The blonde general shook his head.

"Oh, no, it is from the factory where I am employed. I travel with it for a time to watch its weaknesses. It is quite new. Its first trip was the carrying of the dead and dying men. You were there, signor. Later I go on to America for your Cup Race, the Vanderbilt, you call it. I drive one of our cars."

This dazed me. One of these lovely racing persons, and right within my grasp. I didn't kiss him on both cheeks. I'll wait until the Vanderbilt event, but I was pleased and so was John. To a business man of great respectability there is no higher joy than to be seen talking to a jockey, a policeman, or even to an actor. Imagine John's delight, then, to be flicking dust from the shoulders of the newest of all heroes—a motor racer. But there were more developments.

"Then an American owns the car?" John queried, mindful of the midnight song.

"Oh, yes, yes, His name is Signor Flescher of Chic—how you call it?"

John gave a whoop known only to the Indians of Eastern States and signifying joy excessive.

"Flescher here in this hotel? Well, well, of all the luck. Flescher here and that's his car. Say, what a tiny world. Excuse me, Peggy, I'll send a porter for the baggage. Fritz here in Lans le Bourg. We'll have a game of bridge just as sure as fate. Well, this is great!" And under his own steam John navigated up the street.

I laughed again. It was so pleasant to be idling there quite without obligations of any sort. I liked this France with friends to greet us at the border, old friends, *men* friends. I liked the neat little village, with clean old ladies in their violet caps. I liked the standing army. A knot of *gendarmes* were gathered about the nice blonde general and all were talking earnestly. I approached to ask news of the wounded man, now that the doctors had gone over him, and as I came close to them I distinctly heard one reading a telegram, haltingly, for the wire had come in English: "Plas Jean Ward an hees wif undaire arrest an wate for me—Bakiare." This was the message. I gave a little cry and stepped forward, my hand stretched out instinctively for the wire, but the racing general motioned to the man to fold the paper.

"Thas gentleman they asg to makea clear. It

ees wrote in Inglese way," he soothingly explained in his best English.

The *gendarmes* nodded in a friendly way, sympathy was on our side. "But our name is Ward," I fearfully persisted.

"Thas mek no *differentia*. She come, the telegrama, from *patria* Italia. There ees not papers, what you call, thas will permit."

"You must mean extradition." The long word sounded very serious.

"Yas, there ees not such. It ees not *pericloso* for the signora."

"But we know no Baker," I persisted.

"Signora, spik no more. All ees misteka."

"Of course it's a mistake," I heartily assured him. If they would only think it I was willing to pretend it. I walked on to the inn, but the haunting thought was with me. "Place John Ward and his wife under arrest and wait for me. Signed, Baker," I repeated. "Of course it's a mistake," I reassured myself, and turned into the hostelry.

"Do-o-o-om," warned a deep horn from the mountain side.

Chapter XVII

I WAS terribly concerned over this wire, but I felt that it would bring John and me closer together. Troubles always do, and I took a certain satisfaction in that Baker person wanting to arrest me along with John. Not that I want John arrested, but I am convinced that iron bars are the only things I know of that will keep Mrs. Baring out of our domestic happiness. I could see her in my mind's eye under those circumstances, gazing longingly at him from the corridor while John and I sat on three-legged stools inside the cells, holding each other's hands.

That nice racing general did his best to assure John that it could be nothing more serious than a practical joke (which is about the most serious thing in the world, I think) and managed to convince him that any word coming from the municipal authorities would have been in French or Italian. John's principal grievance was that he couldn't get at him. "Baker, Italy," isn't much of an address when you want to reach out for a man and hit him. His first idea was to remain in Lans le Bourg until old "Wait for me" arrived. Then he remembered Mrs. Baring at Aix, and agonised terribly 'twixt love and duty before he decided to go on. Of course I was glad he didn't wait. It's easy to get into a French jail, but it's awfully hard to get out of one. Still I suffered

a good deal, and "jail—Baring" "Baring—jail" kept swinging back and forth in my mind like a pendulum all night long.

In consequence I didn't feel very rested when morning came, nor did John who was crossish because he had lost at bridge. He blamed it on the telegram. John always has a fine excuse when he does stupid things at whist. His two friends were more amiable, although it drives every bridge player distracted to see me pouring the stakes into my little gold purse when the rubber is over. John is perfectly frank about it.

"By all the rules of play you should never take a trick," he asserted in Lans le Bourg.

"It's a queer game," said Mr. Flescher, trying not to commit himself.

"Queer? It's simply mephistophelian," his companion burst out, eyeing me closely as he bit off the end of his cigar, as though he expected to find horns growing out of my head. "I haven't made a misplay for five years, and yet I never win a game."

"That's because you're good," I was forced into retorting. "The devil won't have a thing to do with you."

At this point John hurried me upstairs. All my life when I am getting the better of anyone, I have been jostled out of earshot. My one chance lies in being quick. However I was very nice to them in the morning, although as I said there had been considerable on my mind to keep me awake and make me

petulant. But a morning in Lans le Bourg could sweep away the cobwebs of the most troubled night. It was almost good enough to wish we had turned out earlier, sacrificing sleep for sunrise, and that is a very good morning indeed.

We got away before the others, for the racing expert was to go over their car carefully, and then leave them with their American chauffeur as driver. That is, all of us got away except John's purse, which I think is a figure of speech called metonymy —container for the thing contained—although after the Customs had claimed one hundred and twenty dollars for the motor, we might as well have given them the husk. On the stage they hand out purses right and left, probably because they are always knitted ones. I had three knitted purses once, and I gave them away, too, but of course not on that same Christmas. John didn't mind about the money. He said it was safer to deposit it with the French Government until we sailed than it was to carry it about. The lack of it would make us careful when we got to Paris, which was low and mean; as though anyone wanted to be careful when he got to Paris.

I didn't say anything to John that would irritate him as we cascaded down the mountains to the country of Savoy. Once upon a time I was shocking enough to plan to spend all of his money that I could before someone else got a chance at it. Now I feel that I don't much care for John's money, if I don't have John! Oh, I'm trained,—I'm broken. I "lie down,

and jump through, and play dead." This trip has been a liberal education to me, and while it hasn't been as the Minerva Club planned, I've broadened all right. I'm broad enough to see now that there is just one thing in life I want more than to slap George Meredith, and that is, to hold on to John—to hold on to him fairly, squarely; unless he's mine because he wants to be, he isn't worth the effort. I looked up at him, so nice and big and with a happy look in his eyes, a far-away Aix look, the throttle open, slipping down to the giraffe. Instinctively I put my foot on the reverse.

"Hello Peggy, what are you thinking about!" John cried.

"Why—nothing—John!" I answered. "It was the nice old peasant in the purple cap. Look back!" Well, there's one small consolation—husbands don't know what wives think, either.

But the old peasant in the purple cap was sweet. As soon as we had tipped over to the other side the summit, we found a different people, different architecture, different coloured cows. The transition was centred in a neat old beggar woman of the peak, who had asked alms in French with the Italian cringing. I had said I could not understand her, and she replied that it was always difficult for the rich to understand the poor. The retort was Italian, but it was the last we saw of beggardom.

At Modane we picked up our big trunk, and went on down the valley over variable roads, in and out

of cobbled villages, their streets broad and empty, their laws lax for motorists, whose coming had put the country on its feet once more. It was no climb as in Italy to reach the towns; the complacent Savoyards had settled in the valleys relying on their skill at arms to keep out invaders, rather than to any vantage point of heights. It annoyed John, who loves to mount. He is like that Ibsen hero who loafed around on pinnacles as a relaxation. I believe he eventually fell off, but his fate doesn't frighten John.

"That was a symbol," he insists. "No one can safely climb a symbol, but a hill's a hill."

At St. Michel de Maurienne we turned up a narrow street and stopped for lunch. It began well but ended, oh, so shockingly! There were three dining-rooms at the old inn just like the three-bear family, and at first there was an inclination to put us in with the big bear, or rather the big dining-room where shirt sleeves were the fashion, but we demurred at this, and were led to the door of the middle-sized dining-room. Here the middle-sized bear who had just come out of a yellow motor and was one of a large party, all eating with napkins under their left ears, grunted at the sight of us, and while we couldn't grunt, we didn't care so much for her; so at length we were installed in the cool, darkened room of the small bear, who must have been asleep, for there we ate in state on an old Empire table.

The luncheon graced the table as the table graced the room. I fondled its gold wreaths lovingly, and

made a vow never to enter these country inns again unless travelling in a furniture van. We hadn't occupied a room in all the towns of Italy that did not contain a piece of furniture, a bit of drapery, a mirror, or some article worthy the carrying off, if the proprietor had been willing—or not looking. To keep up the fight, Honour against Empire, all through France is going to be a test of an early training that I now fear lacked the proper severity.

However it was not any packing into my hand bag of the Empire table that was so shocking at St. Michel. It was the attitude, the shrugging irresponsibility of these French that irritated me to madness. There had been no hesitation. I asked if we might have a room to wash our hands and rest a little before and after luncheon. They never winked an eyelid. Madame brought John a cake of soap, and served us skilfully through *déjeuner;* and when I went to pay the bill while John put water in the radiator, she asked me if I would pay also for my *mechanician.*

"For my *husband,*" I corrected. Really, you know—really—but she didn't mind. There were two luncheons and one room, and bill for such. It was all the same to her. "'*Tout le même*' indeed!" I snorted when we sped on. But John was torn between a wild joy and the grief of being once more taken for Madame's mechanic.

At Aiguebelle we stopped for a big draught of *essence,* and fearless of poor strainers or bad gaso-

line, we walked about the village. In France the automobile attracts no attention further than the proprietory interest the country feels in one of its great means of livelihood. A motor new to them as ours is commands some small notice, but beyond that: "*Voila l'addition de l'essence, Monsieur, et bon voyage.*" It isn't that the French would not cheat, but that they can't. The gasoline is sold in tins, the seals broken before the drivers' eyes. Any overcharge would be reported to the automobile club of France, and the automobile club is the controller of many petty destinies.

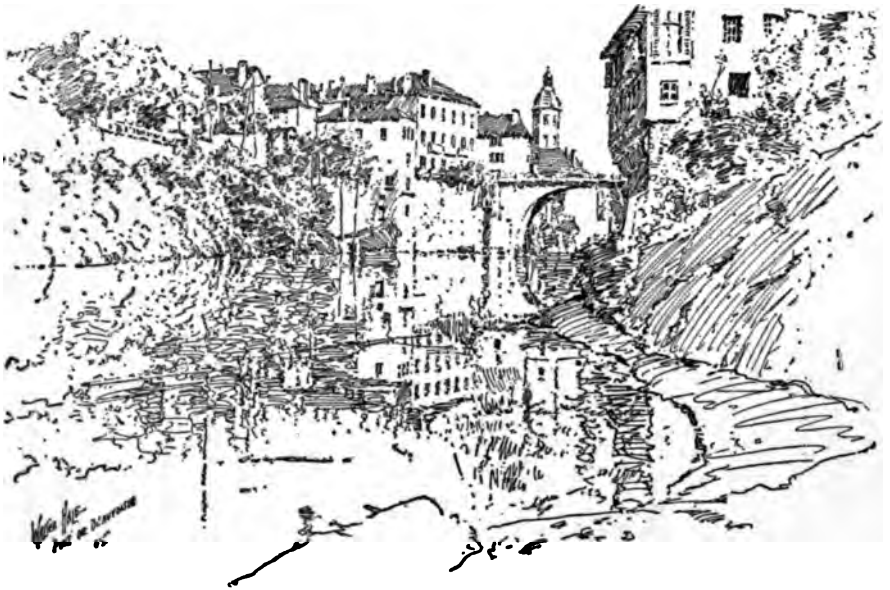
It was dusk when we reached Chambéry, an ancient town, French to its finger tips. It was dark when we entered Aix les Bains. If there had been any doubt in our minds as to the destination of all the great French motors that had swung through Lans le Bourg on their return from the race it was soon settled. They went to Aix.

"Wish these cars would stop tagging me around," grumbled John. "They do everything I think of." But his grumbling was play acting. I never saw him happy before on reaching any place. Getting there is the only thing that pleases John. The act of—not the accomplishment.

"She'll want to know about the race," he half explained when we had reached our hotel rooms.

"Who will?" I asked, trying to be pleasant, but knowing I had failed.

"Why, who but Mrs. Baring." Who indeed?



PONT DE BEAUVOISIN
"You could take it as it grew originally, or as reflected in the river"


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"You see I've done a bigger stunt than she has. That's why I want to see her. Oh, thunder! Must I dress? Well, hand them over!"

"Mrs. Baring's never seen you in evening clothes," I mildly hinted.

"No, of course not. I suppose *she* will take me for a waiter." How simple in expedients the wise man becomes when the wise man grows complex!

I dressed on dumbly, numbly, glad that my faith in the value of a pretty gown was not extinguished with my faith in John. When that belief has flickered out, then a woman is just once removed from gin. I was looking well and I was almost brave, but there came a knock upon the door, and a voice called gayly: "Just a reminder that I am down below and mad to look into your eyes. How are you Wards?"

"You Wards!" Did you get that, said quickly to cover up her slip?

"I'll be right down," called John in joyful accents. "Now, Peggy, aren't you ready?" turning to me as I stood eating the door panels with my eyes.

"No," I answered. "I'm waiting for a maid to fasten up my gown. You go down John." That was generous in me. John can fasten up a gown most skilfully, but would he go? Oh, yes, he would.

"I'll send Miss Grey up to you. You'll never get a maid. You say I look all right?"

"Oh, go on down!" I screamed. John taking notice of his looks! It was too much. He didn't even

stop to answer back. Another proof of his great eagerness.

When poor Miss Grey came up, she found me by the window, wondering how hearts could be so turbulent on nights so calm. In a way, it served my purpose, this delaying. I didn't want to be with her when she met John, and I knew too that she would seize a chance to be away from them. Slightly more set, slightly more pale, she wore her mask better than I.

"They are together?" I rushed in by way of greeting.

"The three are there!" she answered briefly. I breathed more freely.

"The top hook is off—you'll have to pin it," was my next comment, as she began to do me up. "You think with three there's safety?"

"Three is a crowd," she vouchsafed, "especially when I'm the third." She twitched my bodice angrily. It irritated me. She seemed to think herself the only sufferer.

"I'm sorry you are so unhappy," I said quietly, "but you must know—you must realise it's just as hard for me." With my back to her I was quite brave. A priest should turn his back when at confession—he would hear more.

"You can show your feelings," she replied. "It's poor old maids like me that have got to hide all their emotions that would make them plain ridiculous if anybody knew."

"I show my feelings?" I cried out a little wildly. "Because I'm married, do you think I can wear my heart stuck on my sleeve? Don't you suppose that men and women laugh to see a married woman loving a man who doesn't care for her? Don't——"

Miss Grey caught me on the shoulders by her nervous little hands, and whirled me around to look into my face. Amazement ran riot over hers. I was bewildered.

"You don't mean to tell me—" she shook me as she spoke, "that you care for him, too?" I wrenched myself away from her. The blood was blazing to my forehead, but I didn't mind. I just felt reckless, as she had felt in Genoa.

"Care for him?" I choked out, between sobs of excitement, not of sorrow, "Of course I do. Do you think because a woman's married, that is the end of love? I tell you it goes on, and on, and on until it eats you up. I didn't know until I reached Genoa how much I really cared for him, and when things looked as though I might not see him ever, ever again, I knew how much I cared, and I made up my mind I'd stick this out—this trip—if I won nothing more than the joy of being with him, and the pain of being with them. Yes, I could go on and on and on, taking the bitter with the sweet rather than give him up."

"*You* give him up!" laughed Miss Grey harshly. "He isn't *yours* to give."

"You needn't taunt me—I'll make the fight. I've got more on my side than you have."

"Cruel, cruel," wept Miss Grey, breaking down. My heart relented—we were suffering for the same man.

"Oh, don't, I don't mean that," I begged, putting my arms tightly around her flat little figure. "You fight too," I generously proffered. She pushed me away fiercely.

"Yes, and be a laughing stock."

"Dear Miss Grey," I said, my tears coming now, "I guess we both are laughing stocks." We cried it out, then washed our eyes and went on down to dinner.

It wasn't a successful dinner. The two men seemed the only ones quite satisfied with themselves. I sometimes get annoyed with John. He thinks it is so easy, winning women. Douglas Warwick was pleased, too. An actress friend of Mrs. Baring's joined us at coffee time, and the artist was quite fascinated. Her hair was wonderfully red, her brows black, and her skin very white, so naturally he was interested. Artistically, she was full of lights and shadows; so was her talk, and I didn't blame the Douglas Warwick for pouring coffee on his shirt front. But Mrs. Baring behaved abominably, and apologised to me for introducing her.

"She can't act, either," she supplemented savagely.

"I think she's very nice," I whispered back.

"I think she's very awful," responded the giraffe.

"Mr. Warwick likes her," I persisted.

She turned and glared at me. I feared at first she thought of striking me, but managing to look into her eyes, I caught a sort of pitifulness I've sometimes seen in mine of late. It didn't touch me. It was exasperating to have her want all of the men.

"It must be nice to be so small and delicately built," she went on wistfully.

"I wouldn't worry about that," I answered bitterly. "Of course a man like Douglas Warwick prefers the weaklings, but the big men love strength —physical perfection—not scrubby little growths like me." My voice caught.

"Big men?" Her eyes wandered to my husband, and she had the effrontery to smile at him. John bounded over to her like a ball. "And how do you account for the firm hold of little Mrs. Peggy?" she asked in a low voice to me, as she made room for him. A knot rose in my throat—as I did.

"Oh, I'm a habit," I replied, and joined the artist and the actress. My breaking up their tête-à-tête seemed to brighten Mrs. Baring wonderfully. But I know her. She wished to be alone with John.

Aix les Bains is full of women and it follows full of troubles, but it is difficult to associate real heart breaks with such saucy clothes. Whenever I can't stand any longer seeing John flirt with Mrs. Baring, cleverly discussing axle grease to throw me off, I tilt a hat over my eyes, hang a lace veil at the back, and go out looking joyous. There are hundreds of us just alike, though perhaps I'm not so much so,

lacking the auxiliaries of make-up, but if the angle of the hat widens with the misery of the wearer, we are a most unhappy lot in Aix. A woman's hat has always been a cloak to sorrow, but a man cannot hide emotions with a derby. It's quite implacable, nor can he burst into bright clothes when low in mind. I know Eve flounced her fig leaf frock, and flipped out of the garden as though she just loved travelling. And in this deceptive fashion we take the cure at Aix.

Taking the cure means drives in the country, walks along the charming hotelled streets and buying follies in the attractive shops. John says it's cheaper to lose money on the "Little Horses," but I cannot endure spending all my allowance with such a quickness. Now when one buys a blouse, one gets the enjoyment of a hundred to select from before having to decide. At this "Petits Chevaux" affair you pick out—well—say number seven—and your louis; then several remarks are made in French, a ball bobs round, and the next thing is, you're thinking what you could have done with all that money.

The natural antipathy that all good women have for gambling is strong within me, and there are moments when I despise John for being such a dupe; yet again a gentle tolerance for all these weaknesses steals over me, and I say, "Oh, well, why not?" in a broad, generous way. But John is brutal, and declares that only happens on the nights he's winning.

We met our dapper English lord who laboured on

the car for us in old Torino. He was entering the Cercle one night as we were about to buy admissions, and stopped to chat with us.

"You don't pay, do you?" he asked, sticking in his monocle, and sizing up my smart frock with keen appreciation.

"Well, yes," said John. "We've not bought season tickets."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed his lordship, "don't pay a ha'penny. I've not a ticket either. I walk right past 'em, nose in air. Oh, I dare say it drives 'em thumpin' mad, but what of that? H'm! dare 'em to touch me!"

"There's no use," I shook my head despondently. "It takes five centuries of ancestors to develop such a nerve. We hardly have a grandmother."

Our Briton roared. Who says the creatures haven't humour? "Then permit me to escort you, ma'am." He bowed formally. "We'll—however do you say it? give 'em a bunco. That's it—give 'em a bunco. Pretty good slang, eh, for an Englishman, I mean to say? What?" And he sailed us in.

John told Mrs. Baring that Douglas Warwick ought to be quite happy in this environment, studying the various methods of applying paint. "No two cheeks are alike," said he, "and there are some fine effects in atmospheric blues around the eyes."

Mrs. Baring became quite excited, and thought we all had better go away. She seems to work a sort of "mother-dodge" if I may speak so vulgarly, when-

ever Douglas Warwick is concerned, and often he responds, but this time he said quite flatly that he wouldn't go. "The mountains are so beautiful," he reasoned mildly, and Mrs. Baring drove off in her auto on a ten-mile run, and was nearly taken up for speeding.

But it was not she who was to suffer the disgrace that hedges about a patrol waggon; not she at whom the finger of the hotel clerk was scornfully pointed; not she who walked the streets ever in the shadow of the jail—and Baker. No, it was the Wards—the simple, kindly Wards, whose lives and loves had grown so twisted that at times incarceration seemed a sweet untanglement.

The telegraph episode at Lans le Bourg had grown faint in our memory after three days at Aix. There is a feeling of security in crowds, but we little knew our Baker. He struck us through that most exquisite being, the hotel clerk, who called upon us in our rooms, his manner deprecating. He bore an open and a sealed telegram, the latter addressed to John.

Monsieur would please excuse the interruption. The House had just received a strange communication from a "Bakaire"—perhaps Monsieur would read. John read, and I, over his shoulder:

"See by a paper you have registered at your hotel John Ward and wife. Wish to inform you they are not married. Shall be on soon and raise the devil.

"BAKER."



LYONS
"Lyons was quite rich in churches"

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John's reply was to tear open the sealed envelope that was addressed to him. We swept the contents with our eyes. It was sent him from Turin:

"You cowardly dog. Have been held here by bad attack of gout. I lay it at your door, but you will not escape me.

"BAKER."

John turned upon the clerk.

"Do you believe this stuff?" There was an elevation of the shoulders.

"It is not for me to believe or disbelieve, Monsieur." His smile was a well meant propitiation. "We keep here a hotel. They come,—they go,—in couples,—married couples certainly, but they are always quiet. We must have quiet. We do not like this 'raise the devil.'"

"And if there is no 'raise the devil'!" shouted John.

"Ah, then we beg Monsieur to stay with us."

John grew a palish purple. "And let you think anything you please about my wife? See here, now you get out. Send up your bill, and do it quick. No words—get out!"

The hotel clerk edged toward the door, still pursuing a suave policy, but John would listen to no explanations.

"'No rooms in the hotels!'" he roared in answer to a half-completed sentence. "Well we'll find rooms, and we'll stay here in Aix. Just

please remember that; John Ward and wife right here in Aix, and ready for that Baker with the sprag!"

By this time the deprecating gardeniaed clerk had fled, and stimulated by John's defense, I didn't cry but flew to packing. Horrible and triumphant thoughts chased one another through my mind. A dreadful fear of Baker and the old satisfaction at losing Mrs. Baring lent wings to my fingers.

"John, don't let's tell anyone. Let's run away!" I cried, developing my scheme. John shattered it.

"Not tell? Of course we'll tell. You don't want to have this Baker think I really am a coward?"

"There are worse things than Bakers," I insinuated, mind on my earlier wrongs.

"What things?"

"Oh, jails, and riding through the streets in a patrol waggon," I answered him at random. "You know you always turn and look inside to see who's in it. They'll all do it to us."

John snorted with impatience.

"It's the mystery of it. To send me stuff like that and never an address!" he raved. "We'll stay on here at Aix until that man shows up. I'll leave word where I am. I'll show him who's a cowardly dog!"

With a hasty note to Mrs. Baring, who was out (John thought of this), we traversed the long hall (the longest hall I've ever known—the hotel staff was looking), descended the one million steps (the

guests were watching us), and drove off to seek a place to rest our heads.

"Outcasts! Pariahs! Lepers! Unclean!" The very paving stones seemed to shriek at us as we drove.

Chapter XVIII

We had started by the course—we ended by the hour, and for two hours we drove, but like the London 'buses, Aix was "full up." John was still defiant.

"We'll not leave Aix," he muttered. Then brightening—"Why hotels? We'll look for lodgings." And that is how we came to Exertier's, 11 Rue de Chambéry.

Exertier had a café on the ground floor. It was his excuse for doing nothing. His first name was François, which I love, it is so Frenchy, and he bore other earmarks of his countrymen, being polite and speaking the language without a struggle. Besides the wine room on the ground floor where François slumbered through the day, there was the kitchen where Madame cooked, and where they ate and received their friends. The kitchen had been spotlessly clean for so many years that it had entirely forgotten that kitchens generally get dirty, so Madame was able to cook in fresh, starchy clothes, and never forced to dig at pots or kettles or scrub the floors; at least it seemed so, but Madame was always up at four, and things may have happened before our coffee was brought in at nine.

It was well that we were comfortable, for a certain reluctance to walk abroad possessed me, and I

never entered our apartment without locking myself in. John permitted these precautions until he found me searching under my bed one night with a lighted candle in my hand, and my eyes shut, looking for "Baker," and then he reasoned with me. John still maintained it was a hoax because he could think of nothing else, a most ridiculous reason. Mrs. Baring, who had tortured me with kindnesses, hanging about the place at all hours, said it was surely a lunatic at large, which did not calm me greatly; and Douglas Warwick added to my peace of mind by asking why we always thought of Baker as a man. "I should say it was a woman seeking a revenge," he happily completed.

For just two minutes after he advanced this thought I suspected Mrs. Baring. I saw with what fine cunning she might try to nag me into leaving John, shaking my own faith in my marriage lines. Then the lady featherweight, so fair and square, came to the front once more, and I dismissed the thought as most irregular; besides she never could have managed it.

Four days we lingered on waiting for Baker. We tried diversions by way of killing time. We even drank the waters. Drinking the waters is the last thing done at Aix, and I am sure that a number of lady persons with hats tilted over eyes have never heard of them. The only happening that would rouse me from my gloom during this waiting was to see a real patient. John said it was nothing short

of brutal to have me shout triumphantly, "T one!" whenever a wheeled chair went by, but very interested, and there were very few.

Miss Grey often accompanied me on these i hunts. I kept her just as far away from Jo possible. I thought she would be happier so she took a certain comfort in my added misery. hadn't much to do, poor soul. Her guidebool run out when she left Italy, so we went often t Hotel de Ville, the only show place in Aix that body knew of, and stared hard at the antiqu I felt I could safely count on Baker not intru there. It was Miss Grey who turned the water ter, and drove me from them.

"Won't it be queer," she said one day, as I on my fifth glass and had paid my two sous f sixth, "if you meet Baker at this spring? know he has a gouty foot."

"I think I'll go," I gasped. "I feel I've enough." And back I flew to Madame Exer Dear Madame Exertier! She let me kiss he both red cheeks as often as I wished, and al thanked me.

Yet my unneatness must have been a trial to She would make violent efforts to "red up" rooms as she would enter with hot water, with f linen, or with the breakfast tray; even with the b of coffee in her hands, she managed to establi sort of path of order, and, as she left, the air full of flying things which settled themselves

murely down, each in its proper place, before the door had closed.

If politeness *is* "to do and say the kindest thing in the kindest way," then the house of Exertier is the very centre of the industry. John insists that Exertier *et femme* are the original designers of politeness; he says they wrote it; they certainly act it. Aided by the hearty coöperation of Ward *et femme*, it begins to circulate with the arrival of the breakfast. Madame does not notice us particularly on her earlier trips with the hot water. We are in various stages of disarray, and with rare good taste she pretends that we are not in the rooms, but with the breakfast tray, diplomatic relations open.

Madame hopes we have both slept well. We have. And we both hope that Madame has slept well. She has. Madame thinks we have fresh countenances like the little children, and we think that Madame has red roses in her cheeks like the June time. Madame says we are too good, and we protest that we are not. She leaves, whisking things *en passant*.

As we go through the café for a morning walk, François rouses himself, and from his sunny corner wishes us *bon jour*, and trusts we have slept well. We have. John in reply twists the tenses slightly, and hopes that Monsieur is sleeping well. He is. Monsieur believes that the day will be fine, if it does not rain, and we agree with Monsieur that if it does not rain the day will be fine. At night when we pass

through, there may be a few soldiers sitting over a bottle of wine, or, in a corner, a large gloomy carter who sups late on bread and cheese, which he cuts off with his big pocket knife and washes down with the faithful *vin du pays*. They rise, saluting, and François goes into the little hall to call Madame. She emerges from the kitchen; she has been sitting up for us to keep the water hot. The roses in her cheeks are a little faded after her long day, but the vivacity of her politeness has not abated.

Then comes the final chorus. M. and Mme. Exertier wish M. and Mme. Ward a good night's rest. M. and Mme. Ward thank the wishers, and in turn trust that M. and Mme. Exertier, too, will enjoy repose. M. and Mme. Exertier thank M. and Mme. Ward—those who work hard sleep hard—then *bon soir* Monsieur Exertier, *bon soir* Madame Exertier, *bon soir* Madame Ward, *bon soir*, Monsieur Ward, *bon soir, bon soir, bon*—we have closed our door.

"If Baker had some of that quality," commented John. But Baker hadn't; he had other qualifications. He had the gout. That was something in his favour, or rather, ours; but he had as well a fiendish concentration and a great desire to accomplish what he had set out to do—the disgracing of the Wards. This he did in jerks, which was truly Machiavellian; regularly applied torture we could have grown accustomed to. It would have become a habit—like a wife, but these sudden spurts of evil doing kept us

figuratively ducking through all our lightest moments. In these four days John had received no further words beyond a message which was brought to us from the hotel by the sympathetic Mrs. Baring. Miss Grey came also, and the Douglas Warwick—casually. We read the wire in a chorus:

"Still tied down with this foot. Stay where you are if you are not a pup. Shall shoot on sight.

"BAKER."

John was quite calm about this, though I wailed to go. "You wouldn't have me leave, Peg, when he holds out such an inducement," he said reproachfully.

"I still maintain it is a lunatic," said Mrs. Baring.

"Yes, thinks he's William Tell, and you're the boy," decided Douglas Warwick.

"Oh, John, let's go!" I cried.

"No, not for Baker!" replied John.

But we *did* go and it was he who sent us, or rather it was game Miss Grey. It was the morning of the fifth day. Douglas Warwick had gone on by train, trusting to meet us at Nevers, while Mrs. Baring was preparing to leave at noon for Macon to stay over night at a château and drive on towards Nevers to-morrow. From Macon to Nevers was a long distance, but she seems as mad to cover ground as John is. Besides she said she had promised the

painter to be there, and she thought she should. It saddened me to see poor John so sick over her leaving. As usual his motor spirit was the excuse.

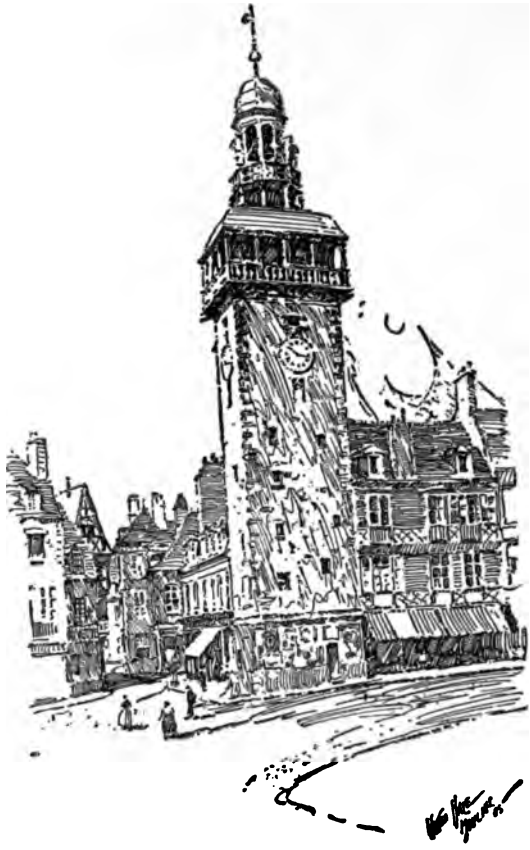
"It would be such a lark to drive over different routes, then come bobbing up at Moulins, and race her on to Nevers. Don't you think so?" he offered, interrogatively.

But it was Miss Grey who responded. She came rushing in without a knock, and I thought at once that she had abandoned her restraint, and was about to tell him then and there how much she loved him. That wasn't it at all, however. She never mentioned love, although she looked at John all through her speech.

"Oh, the most awful thing!" she panted. "It's a telegram. Baker sent it to the office. The head clerk wasn't there, and they were puzzling over it as it was in English. I stood in the shadow of the cash desk. I heard. It said: 'Do not let John Ward and wife escape you. Am sending extradition papers to police. Will arrive myself to-morrow.' That wire was sent last night. His to-morrow is to-day. You see you must get on."

"John, John!" I cried in loud appeal. John nodded vigorously.

"You're right. I must. The papers may be here. I take my hat off to the police. I'd be tied up in Aix with all sorts of red tape for the Lord knows how long. To think he's coming, too, and I can't even smash him."



MOULINS
"The old Jacquemart, in whose shadow the criminals were hiding"

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Miss Grey fled back, red spots of excitement burning in her cheeks. I envied her. She had saved John. She was a little nearer to the goal.

We made ready feverishly. John's manner was a curious mixture of rage, concern, and wild delight in moving on. "We'll meet her yet at Moulins; then have a round-up at Nevers." I didn't answer, but I felt that the rounding-up of Baker and our several destinies was near at hand.

The Aix actress with the red hair had said many things I didn't understand. She had talked of "O.P. sides," and of the "gridiron"; also "going up on it," which, it developed, simply meant that she forgot her lines, though how she could when she had played a part a hundred times is quite beyond me. Mrs. Baring's right—she probably can't act. Not that I mind—I can't act either; but when she spoke of troubles I was right there, my heart with hers.

It seems her troubles follow her clear to the stage door, but there they stay. They can't go in, you see, because they're real, so they stay outside and she is care-free while she works, and though they may be waiting for her when she leaves, she's had an evening's respite and can go on. As stage doors are to her, so is the motor car to me. So has it been the last three days, as we rushed on from Aix to sad Nevers. I've kept them out through all of our vicissitudes. I just breathed in the glory of the great varied landscape, and once or twice I thought we'd gone so fast that we had left them far behind,

but no, they'd bought through tickets for Nevers and waited for me. Still I am grateful for these three days' reprieve. I now take my enjoyment in looking back on happiness, not forward to it.

To leave the Alps, the canny Alps, that grow each moment more attractive as they recede, is like being ushered from the presence of a group of royal giants. One should go hat in hand. When an automobile is perfected, it will, I know, insist on backing down, making deep curtsies. One of these will be at Les Echelles, not only for the long mountain tunnel, grateful to these royal personages for "letting us down easily," but for the monks of Grande Chartreuse—the monks that were, the fragments of them now in Spain, continuing the distilling of the liqueur which has lost its tang with the roots and herbs of its old environment.

At Pont de Beauvoisin I bought a postal depicting the poor brothers as they left the monastery between the rows of French chasseurs. It was the cruellest thing in Pont de Beauvoisin—that postal card; otherwise it was a merry, flippant, upside-downy village. You could take it as it grew originally, or as reflected in the river; either way it was the same, ripples of amusement in the watery village, waves of merriment in the upright one.

La Tour du Pin, too, was charming, and from there we found comparatively level going over the Route Italien into Lyons. But there is nothing level about Lyons, except where there are car tracks.

The difficulty lies not in grades, but in cobblestones, round ones that confront you on all sides. You do not motor up the street you want, but up the street with tracks. In that way we picked our hostelry.

"A hotel, please, that's on a car track," we asked of a small boy who begged to be our guide. He sat down in the bottom of the car, and so enjoyed himself that we had looped the loop of the electrics twice before he was detected. He eventually picked out a good one, and we dined well. At least we started well. We had a brightish waiter, but over keen to air his knowledge. It is great fun to ask a Frenchman to say Ward. The waiter struggled with it.

"Ah, M'sieur," he said to John, "It ees not possible for put ze name of Va-a-r-r-d into zee Franch. *Mais* we have many of word zat go from Franch to Angleesh wiz grand *facilité. Par exemple:* here one calls me zee name of Boulanger, like *le général, M'sieur, et tout le monde* she know zee name ees Bakaire."

"Help! Help!" I cried, making a pretense to crawl beneath the table.

"So, sir, we meet at last," roared John. The waiter backed against the wall, eyes bulging.

"I make M'sieur to *rager*?"

"One question on your life!" demanded John sternly. "Have you—now have you ever been in Italy?"

"But no, M'sieur. Out of Lyons nevaire. On my life! *Pas du tout*, M'sieur."

I climbed back in my chair. John handed him a two franc tip. The waiter's countenance resumed its rosy hue.

"*Merci, merci bien*, M'sieur." He bowed; then adding, as a proud smile lighted up his face, "It geeve to me mooch of *plaisir* for see at last zat seeng wot you call zoke, *une* joke American. *Merci, et merci bien*, M'sieur."

"Margaret," said John sadly, as he pushed back his chair, "I think that this will hold us for a while."

We wandered out into the noisy night, endeavouring to sink our poor Americanisms by adopting the habits of the Lyonais. Their principal diversion after dark is to mass themselves into the several open squares and shriek, and as they all use their hands in violent gesticulation, a bird's-eye view must give an impression of the fair at Donnybrook without shillalehs. Once we turned into a little open *place* close by the water, and found over a dingy doorway a dingy eagle. Its outspread sheltering wings served as a reminder to the hunted Wards that there should be a sweet immunity from all pursuing Bakers, since we were under its protection.

John immediately determined to call upon the Consul in the morning, and ask just what list of crimes could procure the extradition papers, and in that delicate manner, discover what he had committed.

"By George, I'll see him," he concluded, "even if

I fail to meet her at Moulins!" As one may infer, John wanted very much to see the Consul.

John saw the Consul. We drove the car with the baggage to the dingy building. The dingy eagle looked very cross that morning. I told John so. He said that it was not supposed to be a portrait of the government's representative. The Consul was a splendid fellow; still if I was afraid, I could call later. I retorted that I had no fear, though I thought they might have painted a pleasanter expression on the bird. They put that up there just to scare off Americans. John said that this was nonsense, and would I or would I not go in. I decided I would not, visiting instead the churches—and the silks. Lyons was quite rich in churches, although there was very little time for seeing them because there were so many silks, but, like the fish of Pesaro, not particularly cheap. Still it kept me occupied, and when one's heart is full of dire forebodings, there is nothing like an hour or two of shopping. That's the reason I was late—my mind was so distressed. I had to linger longer than I would have ordinarily. When I returned, I found John in the car running it about the *place* in circles, as one would exercise a restless horse, only this time the horse was driving, I mean, of course, John was the restless one.

"Jump in, jump in!" he said by way of greeting. "What did you buy after all this time? A cake of soap?"

"No, not a thing. I didn't know the name for shoestrings, and that was all I wanted. John, tell me—was the Consul nice?"

"Wait till we get across the river—got the map?"

"Yes, they gave me a city map at the garage. You follow up the tram until you cross the Rhone, and then from here to Paris, Route de Paree is all you have to ask along the way."

John spoke no more until we were in the country. I wriggled impatiently in the silence, but when we were beyond the suburbs, with the city a lovely cup below, he drew two wires from his pocket.

"I sent my card in to the Consul," he began, and got in quicker than I thought anyone ever could unless he was the President. The Consul was a fine old chap; his eyes looked as though they might twinkle on good provocation, but there was no twinkling at the first sitting.

"'Mr. John Ward,' he greeted me, 'it is curious that you should stumble in on us this morning. I have just received a telegram from Aix; received two in fact, for there was one for me and one for you put in my care. I give you permission to read mine.' Read that one addressed to him, Peg." John handed it to me. I read:

"Hear through mechanic in garage that couple known as John Ward and wife, have left in motor for Lyons. Will bear all expense if hotels are searched

and the two detained. I claim this attention as American citizen. They are not man and wife.

"BAKER,
"Hotel Belle."

"And now the one to me," said John, as I looked anxiously into his glowering face. Again I read:

"You worm! Am very low with gout, therefore once more delayed in killing you. If you receive this wire, telegraph me your address.

"BAKER,
"Hotel Belle."

"And then?" I questioned.

"I turned right to him. He was an American, and I knew square talk would do. I told him the whole silly story, and why I had called that morning. 'It's not this noisy Baker that I fear,' I added, 'it's the French police. I've not come crying to you for protection, but to ask just what they can corral a man for over here. What does he have to do to cause the Italian government to make out extradition papers? Can you tell me that?' I admit I was a little anxious, Peggy, but the old man was calm.

"'If I am not mistaken, Mr. Ward, while there are several charges for which a man could take out extradition papers, it would be very difficult for an American to get redress for such a cause as this without yards of red tape and a prolonged delay.

But,' he continued, 'while this man may be at present putting up a bluff, he could easily have you detained, now that you are both in France, on some slight technicality, such as speeding, or,' he spoke apologetically, 'for living, Mr. Ward, with a wife not your own.'"

"John Ward!" I shrieked, "what did you do?"

"Well, I didn't hit him, and I didn't want to. I saw he felt as bad about it as I did, only in a different way. I was sort of dazed and helpless. 'Sir,' I said to him, 'if I'm not married to my wife, then whose wife am I married to?' 'Why what I should infer,' said the old gentleman, his colour deepening, 'is that you are at present posing as the husband of a certain Mrs. Baker.'"

"You told him John, you told him all about me?" I felt the shame of it.

"Well, yes, I did. Said we had been married for ten years. I was walking up and down by this time, and I suppose I seemed a little agitated. The minute a man gets earnest, he looks guilty. I should have sat still in a big armchair, puffing at a long cigar like that calm actor who played Sherlock Holmes."

"What did he say to that?" I relentlessly persisted.

"Peggy," John's voice sunk to a whisper, "he asked to see our marriage license. 'You have it with you, doubtless,' he tacked on, seeing my blank stare. I thought of a story I read once of Bunner's. 'No,' I answered him, pretty hot around the collar by that

time, 'of course you've yours?' It was a facer. 'It is doubtless in my house,' he answered vaguely. 'Mine is doubtless in my house,' I retorted. 'When we started on this motor trip, we filled our tool chest, bought a few extra tires, two mackintoshes, and a sun umbrella. But we quite forgot to take along our marriage license, and if we had, what if we'd lost it? I suppose that would have been equivalent to a legal separation. So far as I can make out, the only chance for a decent couple to prove they're decent, is to have their certificates tattooed upon their skin. Hanged if it isn't.'"

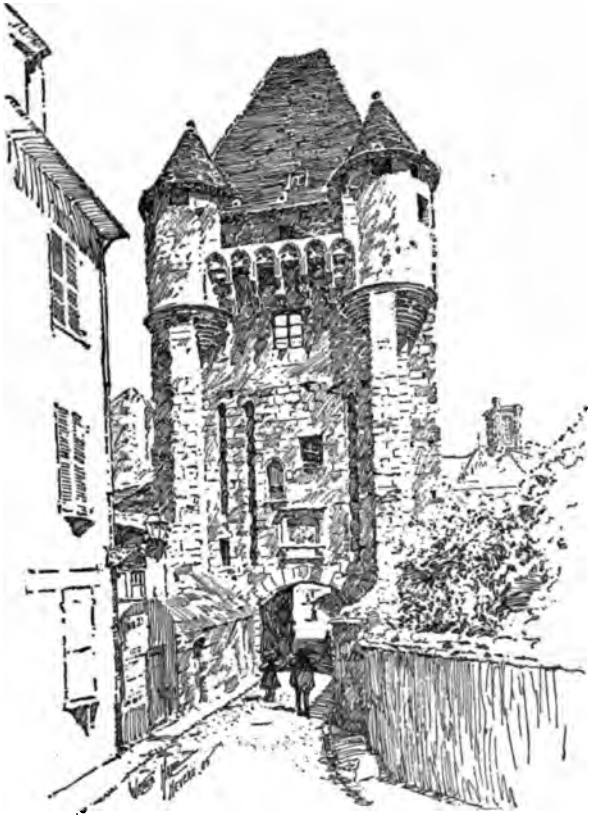
"John! to the Consul? What did he say?" I remembered the cross eagle.

"Well, Peggy, that's where the American of him came out. He was a dignified old fellow, but his eyes began to twinkle, and his face creased up in smiling wrinkles, though he went on with the subject very dryly. 'I never cared much for tattooing, Mr. Ward, after I once had a girl's initials done on my arm to show how much I loved her. Before the soreness had gone out, I met and loved another. It's no lasting proof, my friend.' We smiled at each other. 'No, a man's word goes as far with me as India ink. I'll take your's, since I feel it's just as good as Baker's—a little better, I should say. He seems to have what the artistic cult call temperament —that's only once removed from temper, Mr. Ward, and a man in temper will do anything.' So saying he sent off a telegram to Baker, and told him very

civilly that he knew John Ward, and had every reason to believe he and his wife were married. I sent him one also; under the restraining influence of Uncle Sam it was quite respectable. I said we were travelling on to Paris, and we couldn't have our summer spoiled through the mad antics of a jackass. To prove I was no coward, I would wire our address from time to time, and when his gout permitted, he could come on and kill me. I gave him Roanne for this afternoon and a hotel. We'll never make Nevers to-night,"—regretfully—"just possibly Moulins. But even so, we'll miss her." And, later, as though an explanation was in order—"She'll beat our run."

Then he shook off his gloom. "It all ended with my shaking hands with the old gentleman. 'Remember, Mr. Ward,' he said, 'while I know this extradition story is all humbug, since he didn't speak of it to me, he might detain you for a little on some technicality.' But to tell the truth, Peg, I've put one Baker out of my mind. The man is mad as a March hare. Now let's forget about it and admire the landscape."

So with something of our oldtime facility in disposing of our difficulties, we opened our hearts to the sunshine and the hills. The sixty miles of rolling farm land before we reached Roanne is like no other bit of country in the world. From every hill crest, and we seemed to be continually on one of them, stretched an unbounded view of more hills. On and on, and on, billowed the land, rich in grains and



NEVERS
"Its grim fortifications hint at tragedies"



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pasture, true, full-blossomed mother earth. There was no architecture, no villages to speak of, only the checkered fields, the men and women working in them, and us. Us and a nail, I should say; and shortly after the nail became a part of us, a puncture.

We had grown accustomed to punctures by the wayside, not for ourselves, but for others. Over here the bodies of the cars seem too heavy for the tires, and they are always bursting. Besides, contrary to the idea generally accepted, the centuries of stone which form the beds of these fine roads, offer a much greater resistance than do our younger roads at home—a bump is a bump indeed on an old Roman Way, and there were many bumps over the Route de Paris. Yet the hill roads are invariably fine, and why a nail should come to us (a French shrug here) when we were so near to shaping our destinies before the night was over, only our destinies can say. At any rate it gave us the sunset from the highest hill-top, and an opportunity to discover the indifference of Thomas, U.S.A.

Thomas, U.S.A., rolled by in limousine with a chauffeur and Mrs. Thomas, U.S.A., sitting stiffly in the tonneau, staring at the scenery with unseeing eyes, just as one cuts an acquaintance when driving in the Park. They came upon us as poor John was endeavouring to jack up the car, and when I heard their friendly horn, a little higher than the European ones, I got all ready to say: "Thank you, no, we

can do it very well ourselves." And then the Thomases of U.S.A. chugged past us, Mrs. Thomas, U.S.A., looking through at a bit of scenery directly back of me, and Mr. Thomas, U.S.A., watching us curiously. I wrathfully looked after them, and saw their white lettered baggage at the back. "I shall remember you," I said to the white letters; "you are Thomas, U.S.A."

We reached Roanne at dusk. John gave up Moulins, and scorched to the hotel that he had picked out of the Baedeker, and named to Baker in his wire. We were both madly curious and charged into the hall, exchanging only hasty compliments with our trim landlady. John leaned across the desk of the cashier and scanned the letters in the rack. There was no telegram among them.

"A despatch, madame?" he interrogated in careful French. "Has not one arrived here for John Ward?"

"A despatch for John Ward, you say, monsieur?" The little woman wrinkled up her brows. "But surely yes, it came an hour ago."

"Then may I have it, if you please?"

Madame grew dignified.

"I fear that you cannot, Monsieur, for they no sooner read it than on they went, and took it with them."

"*Who* went on, Madame?" chorused John and Peggy Ward.

"John Ward and wife? Who else, Monsieur?"

Chapter XIX

WHEN it penetrated through our dulled senses that there was another couple named John Ward and wife, John reached weakly for the pen, groped his way to the register, and as if in mute apology for his remarkable demand, displayed his signature with the "habit" tacked on also to some advantage.

"*Voyez*, Madame," said John to her, making the most of a good climax. Our landlady saw and gave a little squeal.

"Another, ah, how droll! To think that there are two of you!" To our surprise and our delight, she clasped her hands and laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks. We preferred it to heroics or a gardeniaed clerk. It was a sort of outlet to our perplexed emotions.

"Peggy," said John, speaking rapidly to me in English, "we haven't got the French to explain our troubles to Madame. At least she doesn't look upon us as impostors. That's a relief. She believes there can be two John Wards, and I suppose it's possible. Nature broke the mould, but not necessarily the name, when she turned me out."

"Of course, John," I answered him excitedly. "Now it's quite clear; and the other Ward is loving a woman that he oughtn't, too."

"What do you mean by 'oughtn't, too?'" demanded John, in a shameless pretense of wonder.

"Oughtn't to love," I hastily completed. "You shouldn't snap me up like that."

"All right," said John, so sure of my stupidity that his fears were easily allayed. "At all events, he's the chap with Baker's wife."

"I wonder if she's pretty," I observed inconsequently.

"She suhtainly is that," a voice answered at my elbow.

I started at the Southern accent, and we both turned half indignantly upon a very prepossessing youth, who had evidently been drinking in our conversation. He crimsoned with confusion, and dragged off his leather auto cap.

"I'm shuah I beg youah pahdon. Whenevah we fellows heah English we simply lick it up. We can't speak a woahd of French. You may not know it, but we're from the Saouth."

"Thought it might be possible," said John dryly. "But don't go, please," as the young man bowed and turned to leave. "I'm really glad you heard and so is my wife, I know. We'd like to learn a little of this pair."

"I cain't tell you anything," the boy returned. "They were leaving the hotel just as we stopped hyer—late this evenin'. They were putting for Moulins. There are foah of us. He shuah was young, and she was mighty pretty, but they looked oneasy."

"Guilt!" I murmured.

"Nonsense! my telegram," said John. "They don't know there is another Ward. They think the old man's on their trail. Well, there's only one thing to do to-night—sleep on it and get an early start. I ought to wire the old man they're at Moulins. It may save us much unpleasantness," John spoke with some reluctance.

"I reckon I cain give you the hotel that they go to in Moulins," said the young Southerner, with a great show of an unwilling spirit. "I heahd them tell it to their chauffeur." There was silence for a moment.

"I know that Baker's been a beast to her," I said reflectively, "and I expect she loves this John Ward very much."

"Oh, she does, she does! I saw it in huah eyes!" pleaded the Southern boy. My own eyes met John's —my John's.

"I guess we'll go on in the morning, Peggy, and have an interview with them instead," decided John. "Now for our rooms." And all of us smiled happily, particularly the landlady, who had grasped nothing.

We had a pleasant evening, this last one before Nevers, drinking our long glasses of coffee on the sidewalk behind the arbour. John talked motor with the four Southern boys, who, in a hired French car, and carrying two chauffeurs, could tell a tonneau from a tire, and that was about all. I won their everlasting favour by demanding and settling up

their bills. It was their custom to pay before retiring, for their night's lodging and their breakfast of the next morning.

"It's the only way to save us from the poah house ma'am, If we don't pay ontil we leave, they soak us foh anything that they cain think of. This way is bettah. We sit up till the mohnin' now and ahgue with ouah hands." And so they talked on, while I was pleasantly sensible that if John must leave me there were still Southerners left.

We started early the next morning, before they were yet out. There was a determination in John's face that did not encourage dawdling over the coffee cups, nor admit of any loitering along the road. John's one idea was the other Dromio, not of Ephesus, but Moulins.

He said he thought I would be glad to hurry on to Moulins, and to remove as soon as possible the stigma from my name. Of course I was, but I felt sorry for poor Mrs. Baker, creeping in on her like this, and had John been any other man but John, I should have sent a telegram warning her to leave. While they were the guilty ones, I admit to being very nervous when we came within sight of the old Jacquemart, in whose shadow the criminals were hiding. As it happened, the hotel that they had given to the mechanician was the same one at which John and Mrs. Baring had arranged to meet in case they both arrived by yesterday afternoon, but that had passed out of my mind, and when John boasted

that he could easily kill two birds with one stone, I became alarmed and begged that he would use no violence.

John was nervous too, and a little hasty in his manner. "No, no, child, do use some sense. I mean, I'll see them, and find a note from Mrs. Baring, too."

"Which will you do first, John?" I asked. I thought it was a test.

"Oh, I'll see the Wards, of course. Mrs. Baring's not so slippery," he replied. To think that John would ever be a braggart! However, I had very little time for even thinking of my wrongs. John had raced up to the desk and raced back to me before I'd crossed the hall. "They're here, they're here? They're having coffee in the dining-room!"

"John, I'm scared! Suppose he shoots you!"

"Shoot me? He doesn't know I'm in existence. I'll only ask that he will notify this Baker there are two of us, and let me out of this confounded mess. Go in child," opening the door. "Got our cards ready?"

"Yes," I answered, feeling very creepy. And we walked through the door.

What I saw was not alarming. At a side table sat a young girl facing us, and, with his back to us, a man with boyish shoulders, and a brown head that was vaguely reminiscent. The wife glanced up and saw us as we stood there. Fright came into her eyes. "Dear," she whispered, "some one is watching us."

The man turned around with a quick jerk. Then John Ward and wife stared into the young faces of Robert Robbins and "about the nicest girl he knew."

John and I probably felt the same thing instantaneously. It was all plain to us the minute we set eyes on him, but we acted differently. I put my handkerchief over my face and laughed wildly. John advanced upon them. R. Robbins opened up the conversation.

"You said in Rome you thought the best thing for me would be to take another name," he started out, wisely aggressive.

"I said to take another, not to take mine," returned my husband.

"Well, yours is another. I thought it would do well because it is so common."

"Oh, I don't know," visible excitement in John's manner.

"Of course, I don't mean that," hurried in Robert Robbins, as his more tactful wife groped madly for his foot. "You see it was this way. But won't you sit down, Mrs. Ward?" His cheek was beautiful. "And you haven't met my wife yet, have you?" John and I bowed and all took chairs as solemn as a minstrel show. "Perhaps you'll have some coffee?"

"You go on with your story!" roared John Ward the first. "I'll pay for my own coffee!"

"All right, all right. Just hear me out," replied the placid youngster. "It's plain enough. You'll

admit right at the start, won't you, that this route you're going over was not as you originally planned."

"Yes, I'll admit——" started John.

"That's all I want to know," completed Robert Robbins. "Now I'll admit my weakness. When I went to register the night I got to Venice, I took the pen from an old grizzly bear, who had just put down his name. 'Are my wife and daughter in?' I heard him ask, and at that I casually looked up, and there, on the line above, was the name of Dora's father, Joseph Baker,—my one enemy, the man who swore I was a Benedict. I knew it would be all day with me if I wrote down Robert Robbins after that, and I got cold, and the clerk waited, and the old grizzly hung about until I couldn't think of any other name but yours, so down it went. I call it a nice compliment. Shows the strength of your great personality."

John cast a withering look. "Go on!" he said.

"Well, we got married, Dora and I, got married in Verona. The knot was tied as hard as knot could be, in our own names, of course. I knew we'd have some trouble. 'Dora,' I said, 'it won't be altogether fun, this marrying.' And Dora said she'd take the chance." There was a break in Robert Robbins's voice, and the pretty face of Dora blurred before me for a minute. John was silent. "Her mother, who is a splendid fellow, was let in the secret, and after we had skipped, told the old chap his

daughter had up and married one John Ward, and that John was a fine fellow, which you are, and that I have lots of money, which I have. There the matter should have rested. But no, the strenuous life for him! Over he posts to Verona to stick his nose into the records, and when he sees me in my true colours, Robert Robbins, spasms then, of course, all over the place. Mrs. Baker had already said that I had bought a motor at Turin, and we were about to cross the Alps. She thought it might impress him, but not he. Off he starts to Turin, dragging the poor soul along, and all she could do was to wire on to us at Lans le Bourg, which they knew we would pass through, to tell us Daddy had a gun. When was that, just the day before the race, wasn't it darling?"—this to Dora.

"Probably," said John for Dora.

"But the cream of it has been we haven't had a word from him during all these Jim-dandy days. We haven't written to the mother—she advised us not to, knowing how safe Dora would be in the hands of such a man as Ward"—with a low bow.

"A little thick," said John.

"And so we've gone on beautifully, until a wire came to us yesterday at a town, Roanne, I think it is, yes"—taking the answer of John's telegram from his pocket. "And how he found us I don't know, but we're hurrying on towards Paris, and in a week it'll be all cleared up, I'm sure."

John and I read the wire that was sent to us:

"Aix les Bains. Consul at Lyons has reason to believe you two are married. Advises me to wait developments. Go on to Paris. Will give you one week there to prove your slate is clean.

"BAKER."

"And can you do it?" said John, with twitching mouth.

"Of course I can," asserted Robert Robbins. "I know the Consul very well in Paris. But how Papa Baker got hold of that Lyons Consul, and how that Lyons Consul ever heard of us is what gets me. However, it will straighten out in time." He was still magnificent in his complacency, was Robert Robbins. John hesitated—then was lost, for Mrs. Dora spoke, with shining eyes.

"But all through our lovely trip," she said to us, "I've been so glad that since I had to be dishonest, it has not in any way hurt you." Both of us wriggled. "How did you find out that we were John Wards also?" John made another start to speak. "But, of course," she interrupted happily, "you saw it on the register."

"Yes," I said after a moment's pause, "we saw it on the register."

"Yes, on the register," said John. I rose to go. She put out her hands.

"The shelter of your name has given us this peaceful time. It has been our only wedding gift," she said. Then in a girlish burst: "Rob tells me

you've been married ten whole years. Oh, Mrs. Ward, I hope we'll be just like you two when our ten years are up."

I couldn't speak—I kissed her. I dared not echo Mrs. Dora's hope. John hid whatever he was feeling with a bluff cordiality, as he shook hands with the bridegroom.

"When you dine with us some night in Paris, Robert Robbins, I'll tell you a story that's too long to rake up now. It may amuse you and the old gentleman. Just at present," he continued, as we all walked out together, "what I'm keen for is to get a note that should be here, then make Nevers by afternoon."

The bridegroom looked a little guilty and dropped behind with John. "Was—was this your note?" he stammered, rather abashed for him, and fishing Mrs. Baring's hasty scrawl out of his pocket. "The clerk handed it to me. I didn't tell my wife—thought it might worry her. You see I feared I'd made a great impression on some woman. Kate Baring's her name, isn't it? She says be sure and meet her in Nevers and gives the name of a hotel."

"My note," said John, a little grimly.

"I wasn't really going there," hastened the boy. "Sort of a horse on me, isn't it? I thought I'd made a hit. Does your wife know?" I was not listening to Mrs. Dora's harmless prattle.

"Know, of course, she does," answered John, with a laugh.



NEMOURS
"Sunning itself on the river bank"

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"That's where you're foxy," the sage youth commented. "Tell everything you can—that's always been my principle." I busied myself with my books, my ears strained wickedly. John spoke. To one who didn't know him, his tone would have been careless.

"So that's your rule through life, eh? Take mine—tell everything there is to tell—start right, and don't pay my wife the poor compliment of thinking I think there's another woman to compare with her. Good-bye."

"Apologies, old chap," murmured the youth.

"Oh, you shut up," laughed John. And we drove out into the glorious country.

I sat up, dizzy, speechless. "No other woman to compare with me!" I whispered to myself. "His tone was careless, but I'm grateful, oh, I'm grateful anyway. No other woman to compare with me! Perhaps I've won, perhaps after all, I've won!"

I must have radiated my glowing spirits. John caught them also. The little children who passed by coming from school, wore merry faces. Dogs barked happily at us. The gypsies camped along the wayside or driving in their carts answered our greeting. We raced with the train and beat it, and the little locomotive saluted our twinkling motor with three sharp toots. "There is no malice in the air, no other woman to compare, there is no malice in the air," I found myself humming. John, not hearing the words, laughed at my music.

"Pretty happy to find yourself the only Mrs. Ward?"

"Yes, John," I answered. "I want the name all by myself." John nodded. I certainly had won.

And so the day went, sunshiny, mellow. Even in the narrow dark streets of Nevers, with Mrs. Baring by my side, there was no gloom. The town itself is old enough to have housed centuries of heartaches. It's towers, gates, and grim fortifications hint at tragedies, but tragedies that, like mine, were past and gone forever.

Miss Grey also seemed to have shaken off something of her late depression, as with a borrowed guidebook she galloped from one ancient landmark to another. I had endeavoured to avoid Miss Grey's inquiring eyes. I feared she might read the happiness in mine. I didn't want to hurt a living creature all through this day. I even asked John to walk with Mrs. Baring when we went out for a nightcap of fresh air after late dinner. That was magnanimous. Miss Grey had refused to go at all, and I was glad. I felt a little guilty about Miss Grey. I knew she would be sorry now that I had won, that she had talked to me so freely. One is willing to confess oneself a failure, if the other one's a failure, too.

I went with the painter. Ordinarily it seems to make no difference who goes with him, so long as we shriek our admiration over caryatides or gargoyles, or anything he says is good. I was willing to do



this, and yet it didn't seem to please him. He kept wondering where the others were as if he feared we would get lost, and in my desire to get him safely back to them by a short cut, he did. Of course, I was lost too, but I had every right to be more lost than he, since I had just arrived, and yet he was the loster. His head went along with his direction. I kept that member.

I recalled that one need never be lost in a river town, for one has only to find the river, and then one is all right. The Loire is a large river, and Nevers is a small town, yet while we never for a moment lost Nevers, we never for a moment found the river.

"There are four ways to find a river," I told Douglas Warwick, "north, east, south, west."

But when we had gone over sixteen ways, and still not found it, then the artist said to me: "After all, it's not the river that we want; suppose we go to our hotel; we'll meet them there."

He always spoke of "them" when he referred to John and Mrs. Baring. I didn't let it wear upon me; I was too glad to see the artist displaying such intelligence. Of course, I had thought of the hotel, but to tell the truth I had quite forgotten—in fact, I'd never known the name. John had read it out of Mrs. Baring's note, and that was quite enough for me. I seized the suggestion of the artist, and we walked up a narrow street with great alacrity. After three blocks it ran into a wall.

"The thing for you to do," I said to Douglas Warwick, "is to ask somebody where it is."

"All right," said he, with a pretense of energy. "I will—er—er—what did you say the name was?"

I looked at him. "I didn't say."

"Well, what is it, Mrs. Ward?"

"I do not know."

The painter behaved foolishly.

"Good heavens, I don't either!" he exclaimed. "I knew I shouldn't have gone out with you." His was a craven spirit. I controlled myself.

"Then the thing to do is to walk until we find it," I decided, "and if we have to, we can ask some passerby where the hotel is with the oleander kegs in front." The Douglas Warwick stopped his walk, and spoke slowly and impressively:

"I beg your pardon; the hotel with the vines in front."

It was a little difficult to keep my temper, but I did so.

"Mr. Warwick, don't make it any harder than it is already by romancing with the front of our hotel. They are kegs of oleanders."

"Mrs. Ward, if you wish to see your husband before the morning, we will say that they are vines."

I never saw such stubbornness. We stalked on aimlessly, he wondering in plaintive tones what Mrs. Baring would be thinking of us, and I looking for the passerby. After some blocks of this, it came over me that all Nevers had gone to bed; at least they

had put up the shutters and turned out their lights if they were not asleep. It was most eerie to walk through the dim mediæval streets and hear a loud cough or voices in conversation, and sometimes a sudden cackling laugh, without the vestige of a human being within sight. I suggested to the artist he might call through the wooden blinds, and ask for a hotel with oleander kegs.

"When I ask for a hotel," he responded in freezing accents, "it will be for one with vines." I stormed at this.

"You've spent two days in this town, and don't know where you're staying!"

My jeering touched him.

"I've been at this hotel just half a day. I wasn't very comfortable where I was stopping, so Mrs. Baring drove me over to her place, while the porter followed with my traps."

"What was the name of your first hotel?" I asked in great excitement.

"The Crown, of course," he answered wonderingly.

"Let's ask for that, and when we've found the place, bribe the servants to take us where they took your things."

He was humbled by my wisdom.

"That's not bad, Mrs. Ward. The thing now is to walk until we hear some voice behind the shutters, then I'll stop and promise it four francs if it will kindly come out and show the way."

For the next ten minutes Nevers was still as death. We prowled along like Indians, straining for noises. At last a burst of laughter greeted our ears, but it was distant.

"It's not here!" cried my companion in a shaking voice. "It's around this corner! Come!" We plunged around the corner into a glare of light, and there in the shade of a group of oleanders sat John Ward and Mrs. Baring in front of our hotel.

"Oleander kegs!" was my only comment to the artist.

"The vines were at The Crown," said Douglas Warwick, crushed.

"Where have you been?" said Mrs. Baring petulantly. And yet there was a soft radiance in her eyes that I had not seen before. It shook me just a little, but I had been magnanimous and I would remain so.

"Mr. Warwick, perhaps, will tell you. I'm going to my room. You coming John?"

"Quite soon, child; run along."

"I think I'll get my pipe," the artist said.

But I ran on ahead of him, and to my room. Then having waited quite a little while for John, and eager to tell him my side of the adventure, I stepped into the hall. The lights were out save for the candle on the stair landing, and, by its glow, I saw Miss Grey bending above the banisters, watching something, someone, in the hall below. My footfall roused her. She turned to me with her hands out

as though to keep me back. Her eyes were sick with pain and truth that could not be denied.

"Go back, go back! It's over, it's all over! She's in his arms! *He's kissed her!*"

I started towards the stairs. She stopped me and pressed her hands against my breast.

"Don't! Don't make a fuss! Stand it! I've got to! We're too old for scenes!" I tried to push her to one side, but she was strong. "Dear woman, don't!" she whispered.

That one breath of sympathy weakened me. "All right, I won't, I won't!" I said. "Go to your room!"

"You'll do nothing?"

"No, not to-night," I promised wearily. "In Paris things can straighten out."

There was a rustle of a gown upon the lower stairs. Without another word Miss Grey turned and ran into her room as I went into mine. Three minutes afterwards, John knocked softly on my door. "Peggy, are you asleep?" he called in a low tone. I held my beating heart with both my hands, and after a short pause he moved quietly away, and went to his own room.

I guess I made a big mistake about John's feelings for me. I guess I'm pretty lonely in Nevers.



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shy, which had been a trick of mine in our engaged days. That brought a flood of memories, but I fought back the tears. I dared not let John know, not while I was travelling by his side, that I had drunk the dregs of his own degradation. When we reached Paris—yes—when I could leave him after the truth was out, but not while I was with him. It would have been too bitter a humiliation for us both.

I was glad that John's duplicity was so perfected that he had every reason to believe I was still blind to his great passion for this woman. The development of the attribute which had once turned me faint I now rejoiced in. "One would think to look at him that his heart was centred in his tank of gasoline instead of lying at the feet of an unworthy woman," I reasoned to myself, as we passed on through Pouilly, Bonny, Solterres, and came to Montargis. It was at Montargis that we killed the little dog.

We were going through the village slowly, and there lay the fault. Had we been going faster, the machine would have responded to John's effort to turn out, but grown up people don't know that, and how should little dogs? He was such a friendly little fellow, and I was so in need of friends that day, and he came waggling out to welcome us to Montargis. He was so sure of us, knowing by his sixth sense all those who love his kind, that he didn't think the juggernaut which John controlled would be allowed to crush him as he came to welcome us.

There wasn't any cry—no sound at all. I looked back, not believing it could be, and there lay the little crescent of his body—a mute reproach to the big things of life that must go on. John turned the car into a sort of open space, for the street was very narrow, and we ran back.

There was a knot of people gathered about the little fellow, and now I remember that they observed our coming with some surprise. At the time I thought only of the puppy, and I knelt down beside it, and lifted the warm body in my arms. The tears which I had not shed for John rained down my face, and John was scarcely less disturbed.

"Don't Margaret, don't dear," he kept repeating, his voice choked. It was just a little dog, I know, but it had looked up in a friendly way, and wagged its tail, and we had killed it.

I have told the story since, and always I've been asked, "And the villagers, they stoned you as you left?" But the villagers did not; we thought nothing of it then, for our minds were on the doggie. The *gendarmes* were there, and John asked them if they knew the owner, but they did not. All of the people watched me wonderingly, John recollected, and one old woman laid her hand upon my shoulder, saying to me, "Weep not, Madame, for it is just a little dog."

But, of course, that only made me cry the harder. They couldn't understand, and so bewildered were they that there was no room left for a feeling of

resentment. Once before we left America, John and I were stoned by roughs, but beyond the low-browed French carter, who claims the centre of the road, the European, unless justified, could teach us many lessons in good conduct.

We were not long delayed. The final disposal of our canine friends is not attended by much ceremony. Then John drove on to old Nemours, sunning itself on the river bank, and here we lunched. There must have been good things to eat at the Nemours *déjeuner*, for I remember we passed through the kitchen as is the custom in French inns, and Monsieur in a white cap, was manipulating copper saucepans from which rose steamy odours. Madame, as always, was the bookkeeper and cashier, and I wondered, as, red-eyed, I sat watching the maid change untasted food for food untasted, how I ever could have flattered my poor wits into believing I was cut out for any other business than that of being married. These women are the bulwarks of France, yet not one of them has ever heard of a Minerva Club.

That was during luncheon, while I was fully realising, yet not rejoicing, in the fact I was a goose. It was after luncheon I became a heroine. To be a real one, one mustn't know about it, until one is all over being it. I didn't know it, and I don't see how it could possibly have happened. Moreover, I'm quite sure it never will occur again, but it was glorious to be a heroine; besides it was for John.

We had gone on immediately after our late luncheon. I understood John's eagerness. He had given Mrs. Baring his solemn promise that he would be with her in Paris by nine the following morning. I heard him doing it as I was taking my first breakfast in my room in Nevers, and she was driving off with Douglas Warwick, her face glowing. She had let her hand linger in John's, and she was murmuring something about "happiness." I saw them through the blinds, and also poor Miss Grey, who had asked that she might go by train. She walked over to the railroad station, and her face was stern, but perfectly composed. "Miss Grey, at least, will never be a laughing stock," I thought.

So from Nemours we hurried on through the straight avenues of poplar, pine, and linden, like one long parkway into the forest of Fontainebleau. Here the Fates made a twist in their long thread, and neatly lassoed John and me.

Their outward cause for turning our car off the highway into the depths of the green forest was the youngness of the afternoon. Mad as John was to get to Paris, he did not wish to make his way through the suburbs, that are the horror of all motorists, until the traffic had grown less. The wisest driver enters Paris with the dawn, but John would take no chances of missing his appointment at nine the following morning.

So we drove over narrow, unused ways, into the heart of the deep forest, until we had reached a little

circle which was the closing of the road. A pile of rocks filled up the centre of the circle. They rose in a pyramid and there had evidently been an attempt to grow lichens on them. The moss was thick and beautiful, and at the top a little mountain plant was rather weakly putting forth some buds. The bloom was white and waxen.

"They look like orange blossoms," John said to me.

I laughed a little harshly. "I'll get you some," and I jumped down.

John left the engine thumping, descended leisurely, and followed.

"Don't fall, you kiddy," he cautioned, as I began to climb.

The Fates choked me a little with their noose. "How wonderful," I thought, "for John to keep up this pretense—this mummery of gentle words."

I climbed on. Some of the small stones slipped and rattled to John's feet. He started after me.

"Be careful, Peggy!" he entreated.

"What for?" I called defiantly.

"Do you want to make a widower of me?" he answered, but a little anxious.

The Fates choked me again. So after all, the end was not to be in Paris. I took another step, balanced myself on a large rock imbedded in the top, then turned and looked down upon him. Being above him gave me a sort of power.

"Well, why not make a widower of you?" I

asked of him. "Come, give up this shamming, John, and let's talk truths."

"Why, Peg!" the remonstrance seemed guilty in its weakness. I rushed on:

"For weeks I've seen what you and Mrs. Baring think has been hidden from us all—that you love each other." John made a movement forward. "Don't move, please, and don't speak!" I cried, my hands raised as though to ward him off. "I've waited a long time for this; it's my turn now, and you must hear me out. I really never thought that you were keen about this divorce of ours, John, until I suggested that we give it up in Piacenza, and you refused to."

"Peggy!" cried John.

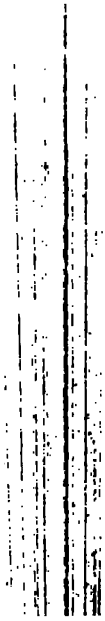
I must have slipped slightly on the mossy surface, for he made another start. In three more leaps he would be by my side.

"John, if you take another step, or make one more attempt to speak, I'll throw myself down headlong." I was trembling terribly, filled with an awful fire I didn't know that I possessed. I'm not sure, but I think I would have done it. It checked John. I saw fear in his eyes. I thought that it was guilty fear, so went on: "Then I knew that what had been half unformed in my heart ever since that day in Rome, in the Borghese gardens—that you loved Mrs. Baring, was quite true. I tried, oh, how I tried, John, to make you care for me. And, poor fool, I thought things were at last coming my way.



FONTAINEBLEAU

"The palace, with the glisteny lake betwixt us and royal ghosts"





I thought it all through yesterday at Nevers—that perhaps I would win out. I thought it until late last night, but when you held her in your arms, and—kissed her——"

"Peggy!"

"Don't come near me!" I shrieked out. For John had started towards me because I, again, had slipped, but once again managed to regain my feet —and it was John who fell.

A boulder had turned under him, and he had gone back helpless, and crashed on to the stones. There he lay still, white, staring up at me with sightless eyes.

I thought as I staggered down to him that I must let him lie that way, with his head down, until help came. I had learned this somewhere. And then the second thought came crowding on the other,—how dared I wait for help when John might now be dying —dead. Dead? My wicked heart for just one moment beat out a throb of triumph. John was all mine now. Yet, even as the thought zig-zagged across my brain, I screamed out in horror and disgust, and lifted my dear love's head, and pressed it to my heart.

I knew, then, that there was just one thing I wanted, and that was for John to live. He could be the husband of any woman that he chose. That didn't matter to me. I wanted John to live. I looked at him beseechingly. It would have been natural, even in that moment, for me to have turned

to John, and to have asked him what to do, but this was a time when I must act, and act alone. I held my breath and listened. There was no voice,—no sound of life, only the sullen pounding of the engine of our motor car.

The sullen pounding of the engine! It came like an answer to my cry for help. But how could I? John had always been with me when I had driven it. How could I guide that car to Fontainebleau? I looked at John again. His face seemed to be taking on a more deathly pallour. There must be no question whether or not I could. I arose, placed my coat under his poor head, saw that the limbs were not cramped or twisted, and sprang into the car.

Everything that John had ever said to me, which I had seemingly forgotten, as I had carelessly accepted, came back into my mind. "Begin with the low speed, start slowly, no matter what your haste," John had once said. I set the clutch, and the car moved on. My thoughts outstripped it. My mental pictures and impressions of all sorts, all subjects, moved like a biograph, quickly and yet not one before the other.

Now I'll go to the high speed. It doesn't set in. Oh, dear, what is the matter? Hold on now, Peggy, don't get panicky! There, it's going faster. But what does it need to give it power. Why, fuel, of course. That must be gas, and that's the throttle. I must open up the throttle. Now, it's bounding. But the road is bad. John would never have gone

this way over ruts. Yes, John would for me—I will for John. Oh, please, God, let me do this for John. Don't let anything go wrong. Heavens, that rut! What if we should burst a tire. Why do I say "we," I wonder? It's force of habit. There never can be another we—there never will be without John. Now I remember what I should do when I come to a rut—put my foot on the brake. It delays us a little, but I may save a tire. "Without John," did I say? Why, he's got to live. Fate wouldn't be so cruel as to have me be the one to kill him,—I who love him—he must be saved.

How we are crawling, or do I just imagine it? Yes, I've grown accustomed to our pace. That's the reason people speed and never know it. Once on Eighth Avenue I saw a most surprised man—what am I talking of! John's hurt and we are crawling. Now let me think, just what does this car run on—on gasoline and electricity. The throttle's open, so it has gas. What it wants now is more of that electric spark—that's it. I must advance the spark. It's the little brass thing here. How it responds. But what's that thumping noise? John said, "Listen to your engine—it will always tell you what is wrong." But it doesn't tell—it only thumps. Didn't this happen once when we were leaving Rome? Oh, if John were only here to ask. But he can't be here—I'm saving him. He's dying.

Dying? He's *not* dying. Oh, that thumping. I remember, I remember! I have advanced the spark

too quickly. I must retard it, and then move it forward, gently,—slowly. That was it—the noise has stopped. How we are whizzing. If John were here to see me,—Margaret Ward! You are exulting! You feel elated! Are you a fiend, or are you like the rest of poor humanity? What things thoughts are. I'm glad that no one knows them but inner selves. How long ago that was when I reasoned that all out. We were going up the Alps. I was happy then. John was with me. Oh, John, live, live!

Here is the main road,—now for trouble. How can I steer and do all the other things as well. Is that a motor coming? Yes! What shall I do, *what shall I do!* It's past. I put my foot on the reverse. It was right, too. John told me once. But that car didn't sound their horn. My goodness, I'm not sounding mine. I can't help it—I'll get a doctor to see John, and then they can do just anything they please with me. If John should die, I must give whatever money he may leave to Mrs. Baring. I know that he would want it so. I wonder if she cares as much as I do? Just think,—I'm saving him for her. I don't care. Oh, John, dear, live!

Here is a down grade, and a steep ascent beyond. What must I do? I know,—it's just the same with sleds when one's a little girl, fly down without the brake so as to gather strength to go up the next hill just as fast. Here we go now. How the air cuts my face. That was a *gendarme* way back there. What did he call to me? "*Vite, trop vite?*" Why

I know what that means. It's "fast, too fast." I guess he doesn't know John or just how dear he is. What's that sound inside of me. I'm laughing. Of all the times to laugh. There's no joke about John's dying. Dying? He's not dying—I'm saving him.

Look out. There's something on the hill crest! It's a cart, and on my side. They are uncertain what to do. If they start over to the left, we'll crash. Now dare I take my hand from off this wheel and motion to them to stay where they are? I did it. I see it can be done. Perhaps in a little I can sound the horn. Where is this town? It seems I've been doing this forever. There's not a tower in sight. These circles in the park are hard to go around, and there's another *gendarme*.

Stop? No, I won't stop. In the first place, I don't know how. There, I laughed again. How horrible! They don't seem to understand I'm making this quick run for John. Do they suppose I'm doing this because I like it? Well, don't I like it? Don't I? Now the truth. Heaven help me, yes, I *am* enjoying it. Oh, God, don't let John die to punish me for this. Hurt me some other way, please, God! I can't help feeling sort of drunk, but it isn't happiness, it's power,—it's——

What's going on way down the road! They're all police. What are they doing? They've got a rope. They've stretched a rope across the road. Why, it's for me—to stop me. That first officer has 'phoned on from his sentry box, and I can't get a

doctor,—and I must stop or I'll be wrecked. How do I stop? Oh, John, *help me.* I know now,—throttle down,—pull out the clutch,—put on the brake,——

"You want me, gentlemen?" I said to the policemen.

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Even then I didn't know I was a heroine. I seemed at the moment to be only a felon—one trying very hard to explain to the *gendarmes* what had happened, and how John must be reached right away, even if she, the felon, had to hang for it afterwards. I remember leaning out of the car and clinging to the epaulettes of one of the officers, saying a number of times, "A doctor first, a doctor first, a doctor first." And I must have been saying it much louder than any polite person would, for a motor drew up alongside and a very quiet man got out and said he was a doctor, and wanted to look at my tongue or something of that sort, under the impression that I was quite delirious.

Of course I wouldn't be rattling on in this giddy way if John wasn't sitting up in bed now, pretty well except for a bump on his head, and ordering me around outrageously as all convalescents do.

The doctor and I (with a *gendarme*, if you please) flew back in the doctor's car, although I don't remember any of the getting there at all. I was sitting with my eyes shut, praying, and when I opened them, there was John with the colour back in his face, his

eyes lifelike again, and wondering what it was all about. Then we drove on to Fontainebleau, the felon holding the hand of the wounded man, and he, not knowing that she was a felon, patting her feebly, which made her cry hard in the *gendarme's* handkerchief.

He was a very kind policeman, and told the doctor that I would not be troubled; that he would explain the "so remarkable event" to his captain, and I begged the doctor to do anything that was right, or that wasn't right, for that matter, and to put it in his bill. So he gave the man some gold and arranged to have the car pushed along the road to a garage. They wanted me to drive it, but I said I hadn't the ghost of an idea how it worked, which made them laugh, and I was then called a heroine.

All that happened after dear John was put to bed in the little hotel opposite the palace, with the glisteny lake betwixt us and royal ghosts, and after I knew that it was only a bad bump, I slipped out and sent Mrs. Baring a dispatch telling her that John was hurt, but not seriously, and to come on any time she wanted to. I made it as cordial as I could, and I almost meant it, for it was John's happiness,—not mine,—that I was striving for. And I was praying that I would have the courage to tell John that I was willing for him to marry her, when he sent out to ask if he might talk with me.

I was pretty frightened, for it was the first time that we had been alone, and I knew that there was

much to say, but I walked in as brave as anything, and was going to start off with something fine like "Take her, John, she's yours!" when John just opened wide his arms, all weak and propped up on the pillows as he was, and I crept into them. Then began this most extraordinary and unexpected conversation, my nose flattened against John's cheek, and his voice all husky as he spoke:

"There's been some big mistake, dear little love. Tell John about it."

"Oh, John, you adore her,—you know you do!"

"You can't mean Mrs. Baring, Peggy?"

"I do, John, the giraffe. Of course I shouldn't call her that,——"

"Stuff and nonsense! That describes her perfectly! And I don't love her, and I never have. What put this in your head?"

"Why, John, you always talked with her."

"Well, yes, of tires."

"Of really tires, John? Not just pretend ones when I was around?"

"Of real, round, rubber tires, dear."

"But John you ought to marry her. She's every qualification."

"Name one."

"Well, she can crank a car."

"So can a horse."

"And she can run one."

"She can't touch you. You don't seem to realise that you're a heroine."

"Oh, John,—not really."

"Sure you are! I'm married to a wonder,—that's what I'm married to. The doctor told me all about it. Pluck! Gee whiz! Why nothing but!"

"Then you love me now because I run a car?"

"No, Peggy, I love you, and I loved you, now and always, because you're just a goose."

"Men don't love geese, John."

"Don't they? That's all you know about 'em."

"Not the strong men. The strong must love the strong—I've figured that all out."

"You were always pretty bad at figures, dear. You've got to do that over. I tell you the strong love the weak, and the weak love the strong, and pretty soon I'm going to prove it to you."

The proof came sooner than he thought, and in a way that he had not expected, for the little Buttons knocked at the door with two dispatches in his hand. He barely gave me time to get up from the floor where I was kneeling by John's bedside with my face all shiny from this general housecleaning of the heart. But my high hope died out a little when I saw the wires. One was for John, and one for me. I handed his to him, but crushed mine in my hand.

"John, I wired to her, I expect she's coming."

"Very likely," chuckled John, reading the message.

"She loves you madly,—even Miss Grey knew of it. She saw you,—John!" The shameful recollec-

tion of Nevers swept over me. I almost struck his hands in anger, as he laid down the wire he had read. "That's something that you can't explain—Nevers! Who was it in the lower hall that Miss Grey saw?"

He handed me the telegram. "That must have been the weak kissing the strong," John answered.

Dazed, I read the message:

"Distressed to hear that you are down and out. Dare not postpone our marriage fearing ill luck. After the wedding ceremony, Douglas and I will come to you. Let Mrs. Ward into the secret now. Love to you both. KATE BARING."

I sat speechless, gasping, staring at the bit of paper.

"Miss Grey didn't mention any names, did she?" asked John, breaking the long silence.

I endeavoured to get some order out of the chaos in my brain. Things were growing clearer. "No," I answered, "we never mentioned *any* names."

"That's been the trouble."

Overwhelmed by a new thought, I opened the envelope addressed to me. It was from poor Miss Grey:

"They are to marry. I leave by French boat from Havre. Will keep your secret if you will keep mine. G. GREY."

"Yes," I echoed John after another silence, "that's been the trouble. We *never* mentioned any names." Things had grown appalling in their clearness.

"What's in your telegram?" asked John.

"It's from Miss Grey," I answered, tearing it up slowly. "She sails to-morrow. I want to send her a long message."

"Yes, do," said John, "I think she was a little hit in the direction of that painter too. She may be leaving with a heartache."

"Oh, no, Miss Grey has too much strength." I would keep her secret if she would keep mine.

John laughed. "The strong love the weak, my dear."

I made a gesture of disgust. "How anyone could care for him with you around, John——"

"Oh, shut up," said John, much pleased, pulling my head down against his shoulder.

I rested there in bliss for a few seconds, then I remembered the divorce. I spoke of it, and how I had thought of going home by Genoa. I even confessed, with a wicked giggle, to driving on the barrel staves so as to get a puncture. It was John's turn to be amazed.

"Peggy, as I'm a Yankee, I never thought of that divorce from the day I cranked the car in Naples. The motor beam was in my eye,—the gasoline was in my nostrils,—the whirring of the engine in my ears. Oh, Peg, now that you've run a car alone,

perhaps you'll understand how a man can be such a blind ass as I have been."

"Do you know John," I answered him, mindful of my wild joy, even while I feared that John was dying, "I think I can."

"Now had you mentioned any names when we had our talk in Piacenza," John reproved,——

"Yes, John, I see, I *never mentioned any names.*"

"Too delicate by far, my dear. Use the bludgeon, —not the rapier, when dealing with a motor fiend. I thought you wanted to give up the run."

We patted each other in mute understanding. Then a small cloud of dust marred the spotlessness of my soul's renovating.

"John, the diary! You made me carry it around."

He frowned perplexedly.

"What diary?"

"Why, the green book."

John wriggled with discomfort.

"That blank book?"

"Yes."

"Was that a diary? Really, dear, I'm sorry. You know you said you only needed a few of the first pages." John's apologetic tone was mystifying.

"I never opened it, and I'm never going to, no matter how you may insist that we carry it around. But John, why do you?"

John put the sheet over his head and shook.

"Go get it,—it's among my things," he managed to articulate. I found it. "Look in the back,"



commanded John. I looked, and there in neat rows, was John's gasoline expense list!

John and I beat each other with weak fists and wept with laughter. Then there followed another hand-clasping silence.

"Peggy, this is just as good as any story. Why don't you make it into one?"

"Well, I might,—I've kept a book of inner thoughts."

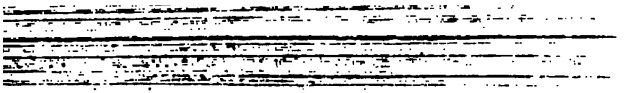
"It could be a sort of handbook on Meanders with a Motor."

That was like John, to think of motor cars. But I shook my head.

"No, my book would be to prove to the Minerva Club that a ten-year marriage contract is just foolish when John Ward's the husband."

John Ward, the husband, kissed me.

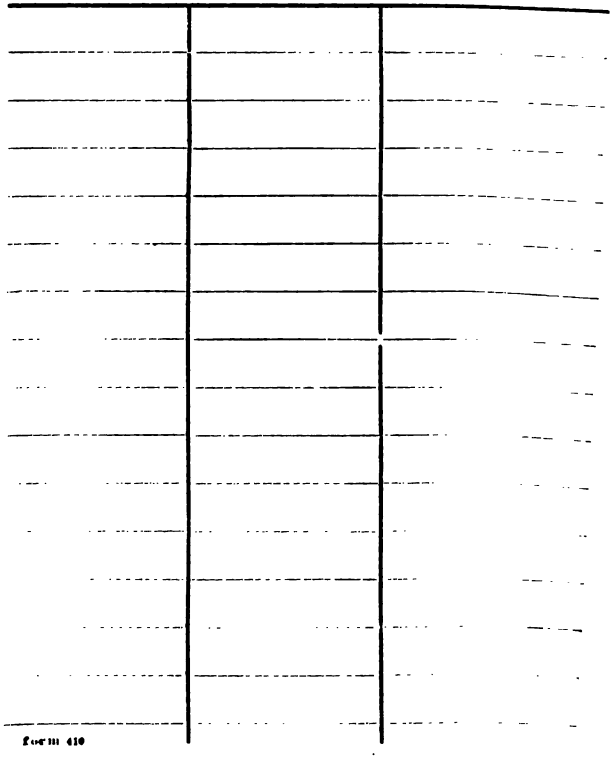
THE END





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